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BACK AT THE CROSS-ROADS

Is the Paris Meeting taking place before or after the parting of the ways? Judging by the actions of the American Administration and the words of the Kremlin, the decision to part had already been taken and both countries are someway along their separate roads. If we were to regard the tone of last Thursday's debate as a definitive expression of the British attitude, we might be tempted to assume that we, too, had chosen the road labelled "ideological crusade," and that Mr. Bevin was merely going to Paris in order to establish before world opinion that Mr. Molotov was responsible for the quarrel at the crossroads.

The situation is not as simple as that, but we must recognise that all three Foreign Ministers have at least half made up their minds that West and East cannot work together. They are aware too that behind them there are strong forces, on the Left as well as on the Right, which welcome the prospect of dividing Europe and want to get on with the job of organising the two halves on strictly ideological lines.

The advocates of the Two World division, both in the West and in the East, have always had powerful arguments on their side. The deadlock at Moscow was not the result of pure "cussedness" but arose from genuine and profound differences of interest which have not been in any way affected by Mr. Marshall's offer. A United Europe, or indeed any plan for European co-operation, is impossible without agreement between Russia, France and Britain on the subject of Germany. Here Mr. Bevin and Mr. Molotov are in conflict on two main issues, the Ruhr and Reparations; and it is round these two issues that the Paris conversations will sooner or later centre.

Mr. Bevin has rightly stressed the need for speedy decisions. The Paris Conference, he argues, cannot, like the Moscow Conference, lose itself in a Russian maze of procedure. That is reasonable enough. But unless he has already accepted the inevitability of failure, he cannot adopt the take-it-or-leave-it attitude which some Labour speakers urged on him last Thursday.

It has been suggested that the Marshall offer has given the opportunity to approach the European problem functionally and so to avoid the political obstacles to agreement. This is true because the functional approach is better than the purely political. But it would be naive to assume that politics can be side-tracked altogether. Europe needs above all more coal and steel. In the short run she can only get them by increasing production in the Ruhr. That is beyond dispute. But is the stepping up of German coal and steel production to be undertaken in a fused Anglo-American zone under exclusive British and American control? If the Ruhr is vital to the reconstruction of all Europe, should not the nations of Europe through the European Economic Commission have some say in its management and would there be no justification for the claims of those who have suffered German invasion? These are questions which M. Bidault, as much as Mr. Molotov, is bound to ask. They cannot be brushed aside by the magic word "functionalism," and by the demand for a simple Yes or No to a Western plan.

In the same way European reconstruction is impossible so long as the problem of reparations remains unsolved. The Russians, who desperately need reparations, or an alternative, demand reparations from current production as the price of German unity. They are in a strong position to do so, because they are making a profit on their Zone and we are making an enormous loss. The British reply is that so long as we and the Americans are subsidising the Western Zone, reparations will not be paid by Germany but by us. The only way out of this deadlock is a direct American loan to Russia and to the other victims of German devastation in lieu of reparations during the period of reconstruction when Germany is incapable of paying. If Mr. Bevin desires agreement at Paris, he will support this proposal, and he will not oppose some control by the European Economic Commission of the relief and reconstruction of the Ruhr.

We have no doubt which course Mr. Bevin should choose. He should take Mr. Marshall's offer at its face value, not as a variant of the Truman doctrine and a tactical move in the war against Communism, but as a constructive alternative to the ideological crusade. He, too, should be ready with M. Bidault to forget ideology for a few days in the hope of persuading the Soviet Union that on this occasion it will be worth while to put economics before politics and common interest before dividing fears. It is for the President and Mr. Marshall to deal with Congress, and no British or French statesman should allow what is purely an American problem to distract his attention from his own job, namely, reconstruction in Europe. Whatever the mistakes of the past, we are back at the crossroads—at least for a few days.

The Marshall Plan and Congress

The success of the Marshall plan rests ultimately in the hands of the American Congress, which must appropriate unprecedentedly huge sums of money in the next few months. At present it seems unlikely that Congress will approve such plans. Demands for aid to Europe in the past have been approved only if Congress could control the funds, and be sure they would be used in the white war against communist Russia. Acts of policy—such as the peace treaty with Italy—which were tainted with Russian approval, proved difficult to manoeuvre through Congress. The bi-partisan foreign policy was built on the hard rock of Russophobia. If the Marshall plan is to include Russia, there will have to be a reversal of this policy. But Republican approval of the bi-partisan foreign policy has for some time been becoming increasingly tepid. Mr. Marshall is not an old senatorial buddy of Vandenburg—as Jimmy Byrnes was—and as the presidential election approaches the pressures of party loyalty promote division. It is impossible to separate home and foreign policy. The Marshall plan demands dollars, the Republican tax plans refuse them; the Wool Bill is part of Republican strategy to win over the Western States, but it wrecks the United States' foreign economic policy. The veto of the Tax

Bill and the Labour Bill, and the likely veto of the Wool Bill are simply signs of the growing tension between President and Congress, and of the irresponsibility which divided power creates. The crisis in American foreign policy is a struggle between Vandenburg and Taft for control of the Republican majority in Congress. Vandenburg's suggestion that Herbert Hoover should be called in to help decide on foreign lending is simply an appeal to the same party bosses whom Taft has placated by unwavering reaction. But neither side can forget that though party bosses nominate Presidential candidates, the people elect Presidents. Marshall—and behind him candidate Truman—have appealed to the idealism of the American people, who have it in their power to show Congress that they are tired of a policy of negative anti-Communism and favour bolder projects.

The "Slave-Labour" Bill

The Labour Bill which has been passed over the Presidential veto is a victory—perhaps Pyrrhic—for Senator Taft. He ensured that the Bill was not too outrageously anti-labour as the House Bill, and yet sufficiently strong to win the applause of the anti-union small shopkeeper and farmer. Under the Wagner Act—which this law revises—the American unions had more governmental support than British unions have ever known. Under the Taft-Hartley Act, Labour is at the mercy not of the law but of lawyers, for it will take years before its obscurities are threshed out in the courts. It is this prospect of uncertainty and humiliation that has roused the bitter resentment of all organised Labour. By vetoing the bill President Truman has undone the mistakes he made in the railway strike and the coal strike. Labour in 1948 may once more go to the polls and vote for Truman and against Taft. From now on it is obvious that the President will campaign against Senator Taft whoever the Republicans nominate. If, as seems likely, there is a series of strikes, Taft will try to whip up anti-Labour feeling throughout the country. The Republicans are set on a dangerous course by this Labour Bill, of which only one result is certain—there will be no improvement in the already strained Labour-management relations.

The End of the Blum Experiment

Last January, M. Blum began his attempt to block salaries and lower prices. The new budget proposals, first rejected by the finance commission and then adopted by the Assembly, show that M. Ramadier has at last abandoned this experiment. To meet the large Treasury deficit, drastic cuts are to be made in official establishments and military credits; agricultural subsidies are to be abolished; the railway and postal charges are to be increased; and stiffer direct taxation imposed. In addition, the Bank of France is to make further large advances to the Treasury and some fifty million pounds is to be taken from France's dwindling gold reserves to meet the gap between exports and imports. These proposals are the measure of the financial crisis which now faces France. On paper, they go a long way towards overcoming the immediate difficulties. But will they work out in practice? Though pensions and family allowances are to be raised, this will not offset the increased burdens which will be thrown on the French working-class, already militantly demanding substantial wage advances and a firmer policy towards the industrialists and financiers who, it is widely believed, are doing very well out of the high prices of scarcity. The demonstrations outside the National Assembly on Monday were almost certainly sponsored by the Communists, whose representatives on the finance commission had joined with the P.R.L. members in rejecting the budget measures. It is probable that there will be further outbreaks of this sort. The Communists are less optimistic than they were about an early return to Cabinet office. They must, therefore, press their claim to be the champions of the workers' interests against a Government which is sliding further to the Right in its effort to grapple with a critical economic situation.

Empire into Commonwealth

The granting of near-Dominion status to Ceylon marks another stage in the substitution of Commonwealth for Empire. Some surprise was caused by the announcement last week, as a new constitution for Ceylon which gave full local autonomy except in defence, legislation affecting communal issues and external affairs was instituted only a year ago. But with the example of India and Burma before it, the Government has wisely decided to forestall incipient demands for full independence before they reach unmanageable proportions. Undoubtedly the strong and growing separatist movement in the island would have gained many more adherents from the Sinhalese and Indian inhabitants if such action had not been taken. Now there is every chance that it will be peacefully canalised into constructive channels and disruptive tendencies will be checked. The description of the new arrangement as "fully responsible status within the British Commonwealth of Nations" is designed to achieve two objects. First, to overcome the widely-held misconception in the Far East that a Dominion is in some way necessarily dominated by Britain. This device may be a pointer to the course to be followed with Hindustan and may be a guide to an ultimate solution for Burma. Second, to enable the continued use of Ceylon, vitally placed in the strategic sense, as an air and naval base with consequent rights to the British that are not possessed in other Dominions. With that proviso Ceylon will be absolutely free from interference in home affairs and the conduct of her external relations. The Sinhalese majority is likely to be well content with the new proposals. Its prestige as a nation is secured and the fear that it might be swamped by a free India supported by large numbers of immigrants from the Province of Madras will be allayed.

Fireflies and Tulips

The Indonesian Republican Government will only find justification for their suspicions of Dutch intentions in the recent announcement that the air arm of the Royal Netherlands Navy is being equipped with the latest version of British-made Fairey Firefly Reconnaissance fighters. First deliveries of a considerable order for the new Fireflies are reported to have been made to Holland. These Fireflies are not needed to reconnoitre tulip fields, and the Indonesians are fully aware that the Dutch military and naval authorities are still hankering after a settlement by force; the sooner, some think, the better. This intransigence, on the part of the more extreme Dutch and Eurasian militarists and reactionaries, has been the cause of every conceivable delay in the settlement between the Indonesian and Dutch Governments. Dr. Sjahrir has once again shown great moderation, but his patience cannot be expected to last for ever. He is anxious to rebuild the industry of his country and trade—an object of great importance to many nations, including Great Britain, which needs the abundant food supplies of Indonesia. He has now received an aide-memoire from Lieutenant-Governor-General Dr. van Mook expressing Dutch disappointment in the Republican reply to their proposals of May 27th, for a federal government and suggesting an immediate joint Netherlands-Indonesian authority to deal with pressing financial and economic problems. Dr. Sjahrir cannot be blamed if he doubts the sincerity of the Dutch proposals. Indonesians certainly suspect that the Dutch military are again getting out of hand; troops continue to land in the Indonesian ports controlled by the Dutch.

Lords' Amendments

The Lords' amendments to the Transport Bill have not, as some people have tried to suggest, been designed mainly to improve the drafting: they have been, if not positively wrecking amendments, at any rate a series of outright challenges to the Government's policy as embodied in the Bill and approved by the House of Commons. If the Lords, when the amendments to which this applies have been rejected by the other House, attempt to stick to their guns, a major crisis will arise; for both the much wider limits for private road haulage and the proposal virtually to take the ports out of the scheme are challenges which the Government cannot but take up. Probably the Lords will not insist, though they may try to score a number of bargaining points; for the Tory leaders, one supposes, are not at all anxious to provoke a General Election just yet, and will not be, until and unless thay can feel sure that there will be enough dollars available to avert a major crisis next year. The Lords are growling, rather than biting, for the time being; but they have already shown clearly enough what sort of treatment the Government can expect for its socialisation measures—steel, for instance—as soon as the Tory Party feels ready for a showdown.

Motor Exports

The motor car manufacturers have responded to the Chancellor's bold plan of tax reform by raising their export quota from 50 to 60 per cent.; and the papers are full of inspired stories about immediate plans for rationalisation and for concentration on medium horse-power models suitable to the export market. But the abolition of the horse-power tax, while it removes a fiscal inhibition on sound engine design, will in itself do nothing to improve the efficiency of the industry. It is true that, by standardising components, mass-producing 14-18 horse-power cars and cutting prices, the six big firms might be able to drive their smaller rivals into liquidation. But under free enterprise this process would take many years; and long before it could be completed, American competition would have mopped up our foreign markets. There is a strong case for Government action to accelerate reorganisation. The first step should be the publication of the full text of the Report of the Advisory Committee set up by the Minister of Supply instead of a Working-Party. This should at least disclose the extent of the problem and the nature of the reforms which the industry is voluntarily prepared to undertake.

Press Commission in Camera

Judging from newspaper criticisms, the press barons would have liked the Royal Commission to hear all its evidence in public. In a considered statement the Press Commission replies that if witnesses are to "come forward with confidence and answer freely any questions which the Commission may wish to put to them," it is unavoidable that "some evidence should be heard in private." The Commission is obviously right. We are by no means sure, however, that it is also right in deciding that *all* the evidence should be taken in private. It argues that "topics on which evidence could be given in public are so closely related to those on which witnesses might wish to give evidence in private that they could not really be separated," and they have therefore decided to publish the written memoranda of evidence and to "hear all evidence entirely in private." This decision has at least one grave disadvantage. The probably unrevealing statements of the press barons will be published; they will amount presumably to a conventional defence of the press as it is to-day. The detailed examination of witnesses from whom may be obtained the type of evidence on which the Commission will have to base its criticisms and proosals for change in the structure and practice of he industry, will, according to this decision, ot be available to the public. The National Union of Journalists, for instance, was, we nderstand, anxious that its cross-examination hould be held in public, but the Commission efused to permit it. We hope that the Commission at a later stage may decide to publish uch parts of the oral evidence as witnesses are prepared for the public to read.

The Miners and the Public

The scare headlines in a number of newspapers at the week-end about the five-day week in the coal mines was a typical piece of irresponsible trouble-making. Mr. Shinwell made no threat that the five-day week would be withdrawn: he said only that its success would be imperilled unless output was increased above the level of the past few weeks. So far from threatening the miners, he was urging them to do better and not to relax after the initial spurt of activity which accompanied the introduction of the new plan. It was always probable that after this spurt there would be some setback; and we were among those who insisted from the outset that the success or failure of the five-day week could not be fairly judged until there had been time for the industry to settle down to the new conditions of work. That as much coal can and will be produced in five days as in six, given good management and good industrial relations, we feel no doubt; and assuredly any attempt to revert to six days would result in less and not more output. Traditions of intermittent working cannot be overcome in a few weeks, and improved industrial relations must take time to build. In effect, the country is in the miners' hands: it is impossible to coerce them, but it is possible to induce them to give more of their own free will. Any suggestion that the Government is thinking of going back on the concessions recently made is calculated to do grave harm—none the less because there is no foundation for it.

The Dockers' Minimum

Decasualisation of dock labour is being brought in at a time when there is a good deal of redundant labour at some ports which carried an exceptionally large war-time traffic; and it is too much to hope for that the preparation of the new registers and the introduction of the full scheme will pass off without further difficulties. The job, however, has to be done; and the sooner it is done the better. Under the new scheme announced last weekend, each registered docker will receive a guaranteed weekly wage of £4 7s. 6d., the finance being found by a levy on the industry according to wages paid. Attendance money, which the port employers wished to abolish, is to remain, at 5s. a turn, but it is to be set against the guaranteed minimum. All earnings, except for weekend work, are also to be set against the minimum; and this means that the dockers will get in all a good deal less than their Unions—especially the smaller dissident Unions—were asking for. It is, however, a big thing to get the principle of a guaranteed weekly wage accepted on a permanent footing in an industry hitherto so much the victim of casual employment; and the scheme should work well when once the inevitable difficulties of scaling-down the numbers looking for work have been overcome. The problem is to find a fair way of doing this, and to ensure that those who are squeezed out get a good chance of training, when need arises, for other work. To overcome the obstacles smoothly will be something of a test for the mammoth Transport and General Workers' Union, which has been widely accused of having become so vast and so diverse as to lose touch with the feeling of its members. The new National Dock Labour Board, which is to supersede the war-time agencies at the end of this month, has not yet been appointed: it ought to be got to work without any further delay.

PARLIAMENT: Hungary or Hungry?

Wednesday.

It was as well that there were no ambassadors in the Gallery to listen last Thursday to the most ill-timed debate on foreign affairs in this Parliament. The House of Commons is intended as an institution for serious discussion of the real issues at stake, but it behaved as if war were now certain and close and almost as though Marshall had made no offer and Bevin no visit to Paris. Hyde Park or the Albert Hall are better venues for anti-Communist meetings. Eden started it with a detailed onslaught on Russian iniquities in Hungary and Eastern Europe, of which much was doubtless true, but as it has all been heard before it scarcely gained in value by repetition. A fantastic speech from Pritt followed, designed to prove that the Russians had never done any wrong anywhere; he seemed to think it quite in order to disregard international agreements to provide information if the nations to be informed are Britain and the U.S.A. This special pleading was countered by Stanley Evans, who was determined not to be outdone in anti-Russian sentiment from any part of the House. Humourously delivered with an engaging broad Midland accent, his speech was a masterpiece of poor honest John Bull looking with distaste at all foreigners and with horror at the Machiavellis of the Kremlin, "if . . . the Politbureau can be described as Socialist, then truly the Spanish Inquisition was Christianity." The impression he made was profound and the House seemed happy to have it clearly stated that there was no way out and that disaster and destruction would soon be upon us. Here, Wilfrid Roberts, obviously at the wrong meeting, intervened, trying to talk about the economic and unifying possibilities of the Marshall offer. It was a good and optimistic speech, lugubriously delivered, but no one wanted to listen to it; any more than they had wished to stay to hear Sir Arthur Salter who had emptied the House as soon as he rose on the same subject. A broad view was too much for Poole who, like Evans, had once been to Hungary. He admitted frankly that he had no intention of talking about economics; he kept his promise in half an hour's worth of terror in Hungary.

More of the same mixture from Linstead; then John Haire attempted an objective analysis of the only country Members seemed to have heard of. He was urged to curtail his remarks by the Chairman, who by this time probably thought he had heard enough about the internal affairs of a country on which no accurate up-to-date information was available, and who asked further speakers to be brief. This was a totally fruitless appeal, and the debate was brilliantly continued along the already determined lines by Bob Boothby who, in his hypnotic and mellifluous voice, welcomed the speeches of Evans and Poole, disapproved of an invitation being sent to Russia, and called on Britain to go on by herself in Europe. It was perhaps not unnatural that after this inspiring appeal to disunity Henry Usborne should begin by declaring that we were already at war with Russia.

As Bevin finally rose to wind up, he appeared a little startled by the enthusiasm of his back benchers. So lately accused of stabbing him in the back, they were now in a fair way to stabbing him in the front. However, he soon overcame any inhibition in that direction and joined in the fun, although, to do him justice, he was keener on Russian co-operation in handling the Marshall offer than almost anyone else had been that afternoon.

When the House went home impenitent and cheerful, the answer had not yet come from Moscow. It hardly deserved its good fortune on Monday when Bevin was back again with the text of the Russian acceptance. This it took with obvious relief, and as its due.

PHINEAS TERTIUS.

THE BOOK TRADE

In its approach to the book trade the Government has shown a hearty Philistine willingness not only to cock a snook at culture but to ignore the material advantages which it can bring to the country of its origin. Books or boots, it makes no difference—they must all be dealt with on a quota basis. Whatever the trade used before the war, it is to-day allowed a fixed lower percentage of that amount, irrespective of the situation then and now or of what has happened in between. The year selected on which to calculate the quota for books is 1938–9, a singularly poor year, when publishers were so scared about the approaching war that they slashed their lists to a minimum.

During the war the quota went as low as 37½ per cent of the pre-war figure, making it impossible to maintain the reserve stocks of books normally carried by publishers; or to put out any but the slimmest war economy standard books. At the same time, twenty million books at least were destroyed in air raids and every single replacement was used up. The number of text books published for schools bore no relation to the demand and, although the Ministry of Education was warned years ago of the coming famine in school books, no action was taken.

In the meanwhile, war conditions enormously stimulated the demand for reading matter from the public. Libraries of all descriptions found their rate of lending doubled and even trebled, with a consequent wear and tear on their books and an ensuing inability to keep their shelves filled. The end of the war found us with an unprecedented shortage of books at home, and a growing demand for imports from countries, starved of British books for six years, abroad. In answer to this situation the Board of Trade gradually raised the quota until last Autumn it got as high as eighty per cent of the pre-war figure, plus ten per cent. specially for export. That was a short-lived success and the quota has now dropped to sixty per cent plus twenty per cent for educational books and export.

The Government no doubt congratulates itself on its generosity towards the book trade in allowing it a greater access to raw materials than most other industries. But that is beside the point. The value of the books produced is out of all proportion to the amount of coal and paper used. In 1938 the trade consumed 63,000 tons of paper and about 100,000 tons of coal. In 1946 it was 54,000 tons of paper and less than 85,000 tons of coal—a negligible amount of coal, even in these days of coal crisis and not much more than half-an-hour's output from our coalfields in a year. The paper is less than that devoured, albeit in good causes, by His Majesty's Stationery Office and ten per cent of the quantity used by newspapers; or, to put it in another way, not quite 2½ per cent of all the paper used in the country.

Yet the tasks of publishers are entirely different from those of other paper users. Their s is not merely an ephemeral product. They are obliged to make good all the shortages in standard works and cheap editions caused by the war years, as well as to try desperately to cope with export orders. Less than fifteen per cent of orders for British books from all over the world, excluding the U.S.A., can be met. Apart from patent royalties, a book is the cheapest form of export in existence. It is an export of brain work, assisted by the minimum quantity of raw materials. It is the one field in which we can be sure of beating the Americans and have always done so up till now, although acute danger signs are on the horizon.

The sale of British books abroad brought in just over £3 million a year before the war. In 1946 it was six and three quarter million pounds. This year it was well on the way to an £8 million target. But in the same period the American export of books has risen from £1½ million a year to nearly £4 million, a higher ratio of expansion than ours.

The Government shows hardly a flicker of interest in this, although one of the most serious deficiencies abroad is in technical books; and it is well known that the sale of a technical book is usually followed by the sale of the equipment described in it. In fact, the position has got so bad that American publishers are buying up British copyrights for export under American imprint because British publishers have no paper. Exporting is made easy, too, for the Americans, because they have no economy standards to live down to. That is the material side of export. The prestige value of making British culture available abroad scarcely needs stressing. The Government have realised it, and spend £6 million a year on propaganda. But they leave out the books to back up their expenditure.

At home the results of the book shortage are felt in every direction. Publishers, being business men, rely on large editions of established authors to maintain their profits. The new writer, unheard of, but in extreme need of encouragement, batters his head almost unavailingly at the door of publication. If his work lacks the promise of certain sales, his novels are only read in tattered typewritten editions by his friends and he breaks into print spasmodically through the medium of the "little" magazines. A few years of this treatment are usually enough for him. Writing recedes into the background of his activities and the job at the bank or in the Civil Service takes its place. In literature we are living increasingly on our past and few fresh trees are being planted.

Again, the newly awakened desires of ordinary people for intelligent books are not being satisfied. The best form of adult education, self-help, is being withered at its roots. A Labour Government, which relies on the wide dissemination of knowledge for its support, is failing to stimulate popular culture for the want of a few tons of coal and paper.

Officials argue that paper is not the only problem. Printing and book-binding machinery, cloth and glue are also scarce. That is quite true, but it is a totally wrong deduction that publishers could not make good use of more paper if they were given it. The time lag in production would still be great. But there are simple ways of overcoming the production difficulties. The first is the use of the large printing works and book-binding plants standing idle in Germany. The second is the release of the tiny quantity of cloth and other materials required. These would follow from a straight declaration by the Government that they regard books as having a priority claim on the use of paper and ancillary materials and that they disown the doctrine propounded by the Paper Controller of the Board of Trade in a letter circulated to all paper merchants in April. In this he laid down instructions on the priorities to be given without mentioning books at all except in one sentence which began: "There may be other usages for which paper may be supplied." Indeed there may be.

It remains true that the greatest need of all is more paper. The Government should see that publishing cannot be treated merely as a commercial interest. In a case that involves so much more than immediate financial return, they should discontinue their cheese-paring computations of percentages based on pre-war quantities of paper. They should give a fillip to the industry by conceding the lee-way it has to make up, and grant it an overall increase in its supplies of 50 per cent above the 1938 level.

The cost would be another quarter of an hour's output from the coalfields and 40,000 tons more paper a year. At the moment blank-coated paper at the rate of 61,000 tons a year is being sent abroad. Cut that by a third, and the remainder could be bought from Canada and French North Africa. Half at least of the increased ration could be allocated for exports and the rest could go to meeting some of the deficiencies in text books and standard works in libraries. It is certain that without some such action not even an adequate amount of text books can be supplied within the next two or three years.

Of course, some publishers would abuse their privilege and trash would still be seen on the bookstalls. Any attempt, however, to control the quality of books published would produce an intolerable censorship. Nevertheless, most British publishers have demonstrated a good standard of responsibility for many years and could be trusted in the main to honour their obligations to the public. Neither is it generally realised that much of the often unsaleable rubbish displayed on bookstalls is produced on black-market paper to which reputable publishers have no access, and much of it would disappear if they had greater scope.

It is no good for the Government to protest that they cannot raise the ration any higher. They have already committed themselves to making up the short-fall caused by the fuel crisis in the two quota periods ending on July 1. That means that in the next four months publishers will temporarily get 90 per cent of their pre-war quantity, and in the subsequent four months perhaps as much as 100 per cent or more. If the supplies can be made available once, they can and must be made available indefinitely.

THE ARAB WORLD AND RUSSIA

The Western world was for so long confronted with the decaying body of the Ottoman Empire that it still tends to think of the former Ottoman lands as doomed to be the inert and helpless prey of some great Power. Faced with the contraction of British influence, one can easily jump to the conclusion that a vacuum has been created in the Middle East which must immediately be filled by either the United States or the U.S.S.R., and one is therefore tempted to interpret everything which happens in the region as a direct expression of Russo-American rivalry. It is no longer true, however, that the Arab peoples are wholly passive in the face of outside forces. What is happening in the Arab world is not the transfer of an object from one master to another but the gradual emergence of form out of shapeless matter and the creation of a community. For the first time since the Arab decline in the later Middle Ages, the forces which move the Arab world are being generated from within.

During the first phase of the Arab awakening, which is now coming to an end, the task to be accomplished was the revival of the self-consciousness and self-confidence of the Arab peoples. In this phase the whole of Arab life was overshadowed by the might of the European Powers, and the revival therefore took very largely the form of a purely political nationalism. The leading figures of the national movement, familiar with Western culture, generally assumed that the way of progress lay in establishing a Westernised society, liberal, democratic, nationalist and lay. There was always, however, a gap between the educated leaders of the movement, to whom such a programme appealed, and the masses who gave the movement its strength, but for whom the struggle was mainly the expression of a deeply-felt although inarticulate will to live together in a community which should be fully their own.

The importance of the present moment is that this first phase is now over and a new one is beginning. With national consciousness and will revived, independence largely achieved, the Arab League established and membership of Uno secured, the Arabs are now compelled to think seriously about the structure of their national community: their attitude to Western civilisation, to the past and to Islam; methods of raising the standard of living, education and health; the problems of religious and racial minorities and the question of Arab unity. Closely linked is the momentous problem of the relationship of the Arabs with the outside world. The revived national community must be part of some larger "world." What should this world be?

This question is not fully answered by saying that five Arab States are now members of the United Nations, for Uno has not yet shown itself to be the nucleus of a world society. Nor does "Westernisation" provide a full answer. Western civilisation no longer holds the imagination of the Arab world as once it seemed to do, and there are many who believe that the Arabs should not look to Western models for the pattern of their social and political organisation, or their closest political alignments.

Three alternatives to Westernisation are being suggested. The first is that of the neo-Islamic movements which emphasise the solidarity of the Islamic nations of Asia and Africa. The second is pan-Asianism which, after being a theme of Japanese propaganda, has been given political life by the recent Delhi Conference on inter-Asian relations. The third is the alternative offered by the new super-national society of the U.S.S.R.

For the first time since 1917 the Arabs are now in direct and open political contact with the U.S.S.R. Interest in Russia is growing, but the belief that the Arabs may have something to learn from the Russian way of dealing with economic and social problems does not necessarily involve a belief that the Arab countries should embrace Communism or join the U.S.S.R. To desire closer relations with her is not the same as to desire to become her satellite. Again, pro-Russian phrases do not necessarily reveal pro-Russian feelings. To praise Russia and say that she would manage things better is often no more than a rhetorical way of expressing discontent with the present state of affairs. Moreover it cannot be said that there is a clear and consistent policy of Russian expansion or that the Arab governments have yet taken up a definite attitude towards it.

The first factor which may contribute to the growth of Soviet influence is the widespread belief in the increasing strength of Russia. It is sometimes asserted that the Arabs worship power as if this were peculiar to them; all nations have to reckon with power and some in every nation are attracted rather than repelled by it. But the U.S.S.R. attracts not only by its power but by how it may use it. To many Arabs it seems that the U.S.S.R. comes not to destroy but to fulfil the work of the Western nations. The impact of the West has created many problems in the Arab world—such problems as those of land ownership, agricultural methods, industrialisation, mass education and the land settlement of nomads. Great Britain and France never used and could never be expected to use their power and influence in the Arab countries to make a frontal attack upon such problems; nor does the political experience of the Western democracies furnish the Arab governments with any pattern for their own efforts. In the U.S.S.R. however a very similar set of problems has been faced during the last thirty years. Arab reformers can at least learn much from the Russian experiment. Some of them hope that they will even receive help from Russia. If Russia were paramount in the Arab world, the argument runs, she would at least try to cure the fundamental social and economic diseases. No doubt she would do it ruthlessly, but could it be done without ruthlessness?

Thus many of those who want reform are looking to the U.S.S.R. They are organised not only in Communist parties but in other groups with familiar names like the League for National Liberation in Palestine and the League against Fascism in Iraq. The Communist party functions most freely in Lebanon and Syria, where the local leader, Khalid Bakdash, is perhaps the most powerful and able figure in Middle Eastern Communism. Its strength is difficult to estimate. It is mostly confined to intellectuals, although in Palestine it controls one wing of the Arab trades-union movement and in certain parts of Lebanon there is a rural Communist movement.

One aspect of Soviet policy seems particularly relevant to the Arab countries. The complete separation of religion and politics and the granting of political and cultural autonomy to the constituent nations of the U.S.S.R. appear to many to provide a solution for the problem of religious and racial minorities in the Middle East. In addition the U.S.S.R. has special attractions for certain of the minorities, notably the Kurds, Armenians and Orthodox Christians. Among the 800,000 Kurds in Iraq and the 200,000 in Syria it is widely believed that the Kurds in Soviet Armenia are well treated and that Russia is the only Power which might put pressure upon Turkey to change her Kurdish policy. The Iraqi Kurds, however, are less enthusiastic since the collapse of the autonomous regime in Azerbaijan.

It is not likely, however, that the U.S.S.R. would make the same mistake as France of basing her policy exclusively upon the minorities. In recent years she has appeared more and more as the champion of Arab nationalism, as of other Asiatic nationalisms. In 1943 she joined with Great Britain and the United States in protesting against de Gaulle's arrest of the Lebanese Government. More recently she has shown herself sympathetic to the nationalists in French North Africa. Most important of all she has at times given a cautious and limited support to the Arabs of Palestine. The official Communist view seems to be that Zionism is not a progressive movement but a tool of imperialist aggression and that Arab opposition to it, far from being confined to reactionary feudal chiefs, is a genuinely popular movement. There are other motives too for Russian suspicion of Zionism: one is American support for it and another is unwillingness to permit the Jews in the U.S.S.R. to have any alternative loyalty. Officially however Russia has not yet committed herself on the Palestine problem and it is unlikely that, unless forced to do so, she would support either party openly at the cost of a definite breach with the other. This unwillingness to commit herself definitely was shown clearly in M. Gromyko's speeches at the recent session of the United Nations' General Assembly; tentative approval of the idea of a Jewish State was tactfully mingled with sympathetic words for the Arabs.

Russian support for Arab nationalism is only one example of her general Asiatic policy. It is possible that the U.S.S.R. will make a bid for leadership of the pan-Asian movement. She may do this not only as the strongest opponent of Anglo-Saxon imperialism but also as being herself the first Asiatic country which has successfully faced the challenge of Western civilisation. The development of Russia in the last two centuries is in some ways very similar to that of the Asiatic peoples in our time. One great difference of course is that Russia has always been part of Christendom, but it should not be forgotten that the U.S.S.R. contains 20 million Moslems. There are signs that the Government of U.S.S.R. may try to use the neo-Islamic movement for its own purposes. There are Moslem officials in the Russian legations of the Middle East; pilgrims from the U.S.S.R. go to Moscow at the time of pilgrimage; the study of Islamic culture is being extended not only in the long-established academic centres of European Russia but at Tashkent and elsewhere in Asia. It is frequently said that Communism and Islam are incompatible with one another. This may be true of orthodox Marxism; but a study of the medieval movement of the Carmathians would show that a form of Islam is easily compatible with a form of Communism.

Thus the U.S.S.R. could if she wished appear to the Arab world as a great Power, an example of successful Westernisation, the protector of minorities, the leader of Asiatic nationalism against Western aggression and an important Moslem power. It is still too early to say to what extent she will play any of these cards and how skilfully she will use them, but there is certainly no cause for complacency in Great Britain and America. If the Western Powers are to meet the challenge of Russia in the Arab world they must have a positive policy which takes into account alike the political, intellectual and economic needs of the Arabic-speaking peoples.

A. H. HOURANI

A LONDON DIARY

THE House of Commons has never taken kindly to proposals for altering the number or the size of constituencies. Too many Members have strong personal feelings on the matter. Though most people agree that the shift of population in recent years has made new changes essential, I doubt whether the Labour Party is very cheerful about the proposals that have come from the Boundary Commission. In all, thirty-five seats are to disappear. But twenty-two of them are in London, now a Labour stronghold. Gains and losses between the parties should be about even in the provinces, but Labour is bound to lose in the London shuffle. In Battersea, for instance, either Douglas Jay or Mrs. Ganley must stand down; Pritt's Hammersmith constituency will be merged with a Labour seat; the combined electors of Shoreditch and Finsbury will have to choose between Platts-Mills and Thurtle. The new Stepney division will include the seats at present held by Mr. Attlee, Mr. Edwards and the Communist, Phil Piratin. Though the abolition of Holborn may cost Max Aitken his seat, the price is the loss of two seats, at present held by Labour, in St. Pancras. I can foresee trouble both in the House and among the local Labour Parties if these proposals find their way into a Bill. None of the doomed Members or their supporters are likely to give in without a protest. But, if these changes are to be pushed through, why leave three Labour constituencies with over 86,000 voters and cut down the number of small ones? And why leave the City of London two Members for 12,000 electors, most of them business voters? Out of thirty-two Members serving on the Speaker's Conference—only nine of them Labour—thirteen wanted to cut the representation of the City. If Labour is going to give ground, so must the City. Otherwise, Labour will lose on the swings *and* the roundabouts.

* * *

Among the remarkable political events of the last two years has been the success with which Mr. Attlee has dealt with Mr. Churchill. The Premier's ascendancy began with the quiet election broadcast which exposed Mr. Churchill's "Gestapo" tirade as cheap demagogy. This broadcast is the first of the selected speeches by the Prime Minister now published (*Purpose and Policy*, Hutchinson, 12s. 6d.). As one reads these speeches, several of which are authoritative replies to Churchillian swashbuckling, one realises why Mr. Churchill has changed his mind about Mr. Attlee. The story goes that, in the early days of their association, Mr. Churchill said that Mr. Attlee was a very nice, modest, little man "who had a good deal to be modest about." Recently I have heard quoted another characteristic crack, made after one of the Premier's very effective replies to Mr. Churchill. "Feed a grub on royal jelly, and it may turn out to be a queen," Mr. Churchill is said to have remarked. Probably personal integrity is the main reason for the increase in Mr. Attlee's stature. His success has been particularly marked over India and Burma. In both cases Mr. Attlee has been endlessly patient and painstaking. And the result is that we may keep good relations with two countries in which, if Mr. Churchill had been in power, we should probably now have been fighting discreditable and costly wars. I only wish the Prime Minister had also been able to give personal attention and study to the problem of Palestine eighteen months ago.

* * *

The United Nations Commission on Palestine seems to be treading faithfully in the footsteps of its Anglo-American predecessor, reading the same documents, listening to the same witnesses making the same speeches in the same building in Jerusalem, and, perhaps, coming to the same conclusions. All the same, I expect its Report to be considerably harsher. Even before the Commission set out from New York, its attitude was causing grave concern to British officials. At its first meeting, for instance, when it decided to sit *in camera* the Chairman asked the British Liaison Officer to withdraw along with his colleagues of the Jewish Agency and of the Arab League. This was an abrupt departure from the procedure of the eighteen previous commissions on Palestine. All of them, including the Anglo-American, had employed Foreign Office or Colonial Office men to run their secretariat and had relied on them extensively in drafting their Reports. By referring the problem to the United Nations we have submitted it for the first time to independent, if not impartial, examination by a body of men who will feel no compunction whatsoever in treating Britain as one party to the dispute, even possibly a guilty party.

* * *

Moreover, much has happened since the Anglo-American Commission was in Jerusalem 15 months ago. What were then merely incipient signs of the breakdown of the Administration, have now developed into complete paralysis. Herded into compounds, nick-named Bevingrad or alternatively the British Ghetto, many officials have given up even trying to do their job. One can hardly blame them for this. For two years they have held on without any policy from London whatsoever and been compelled to participate with the military in the erection of a police state of the most noxious kind. Representatives of Eastern European countries like Yugoslavia where, according to Mr. Bevin and Mr. Attlee, the light of liberty has been extinguished, will not be reluctant to disclose what is going on in Palestine, or to nose out the facts about British relations with the Mufti. If the reference to the United Nations was another stalling device—as I suspect—it may prove to have been a very expensive one from the point of view of British prestige.

* * *

I share the feelings expressed by some newspapers about the ballyhoo which surrounds the coming visit of Señora de Peron. But I doubt if protests are worth while. If the wife of the President of a country with which we have proper diplomatic relations wishes to make a private visit to Britain, it is difficult to object. After all, she will not be the only visitor to this country who has greeted storm-troopers with the Roman salute or has been a friend of Franco. Nor is she the only lady in the world with an extravagant taste in clothes. The Foreign Office view is that trade, politics and courtesy demand that Evita Peron be given a friendly reception. The truth is that the first is the more important reason. Most of our beef still comes from Argentina, though we pay for it through the nose. If the price of our Sunday joint now includes a holiday for the President's consort, in our present poverty we cannot afford to quibble.

* * *

I have received from Prof. Einstein a letter appealing for $1,000,000 for world-wide education in the implications of atomic energy. "This basic power of the universe cannot be fitted into the outmoded concept of narrow nationalism for there is no secret and there is no defence; there is no possibility of control except through the aroused understanding and insistence of the peoples of the world." This appeal comes with great urgency from the man who first produced the formula of atomic energy in 1905 and who, more than any other person, persuaded Roosevelt of the need for developing the bomb because the Germans might get it first. Associated with him on the U.S. Committee of Atomic Scientists who launch this appeal are Prof. Harold Urey, who wrote *I am a Frightened Man* when he realised what he had helped to produce, and Bethe and Szilard, top scientists on the bomb project. The scientists are making a desperate effort to make peace with their consciences.

* * *

Mr. Rank's claim that he is breaking into the American film market seems to have justification. In the latest issue of the *New Yorker* to reach England I notice that among the new films listed as worth seeing in New York, the British take pride of place. Out of fourteen recommended, seven are British, one each from France, Italy and Sweden, and only four from Hollywood.

CRITIC

OUT OF THE WEST

O, General George Marshall spoke out in the West,
Of all Harvard speeches his speech was the best,
So clear and decisive, so easily read,
So much firmly stated, so much left unsaid,
But he seemed to imply that a plan might be made
For offering Europe American aid.

Cried Bevin: "Boot, saddle, to horse and away,
This salvage proposal admits no delay."
With galloping Bidault he forthwith began
To make Marshall's project an Anglo-French plan,
While Poland and Italy jumped up behind,
And Bevin to Stalin said, "Make up your mind!"

There was bustle and rush in the Kremlin high hall,
With Molotov, Maisky, Vyshinsky and all,
While *Pravda* suspected a dark Western plot
For putting the Soviet once more in a spot,
And as the world wondered what Stalin would say,
Izvestia's office closed down for the day.

There was saddling and mounting beside Lake Success
When the message came through and the answer was Yes,
And Uno informed the Department of State
Their spokesman would gatecrash the conference gate,
And the Luxembourg Palace was swept out once more,
While the cynics remarked, "We have been here before."

O, General George Marshall he spoke out alone,
And the feelings of Congress have yet to be known.
The Big Four have never agreed, but at least
The Molotov Mission flies out of the East,
And the nations of Europe must hope for the best
When General George Marshall rides out of the West.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Constantine Gollop.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

His sympathy, understanding, and regard for the Spanish people were surpassed only by his devotion to your company's interests.—Company Report in *The Times.*

Stating that while he wished to be a Christian Englishman, the Germans should not be allowed to know too much, the acting chairman (Coun. J. Nattrass) gave his casting vote at Bedale Rural Council's meeting yesterday against admitting German prisoners-of-war to council meetings.

The Germans, he declared, had known too much before and war had resulted; he could not agree to allowing them to have access to the council discussions and decisions.—From *Evening Gazette* (Middlesbrough).

The question many people are asking is: "Will the British leave Palestine?" I am convinced that when the Lord descends to deliver Jerusalem from the besieging armies in the last great battle, the Union Jack will still be flying over Jerusalem.—Letter in *County Down Spectator.*

Yes, our country indeed grows good, green grass. I always feel more cheerful and better when feeding on it, and I would strongly recommend its consumption by all who wish their horses—and their individual selves—to win back the fame of England in the world of sport.—Letter in *Observer.*

FRENCH DEMOCRACY

(This is the second of two articles from a Special Correspondent.)

IT was over a year ago, a lovely day in early June with small clouds puffing mistily over Paris and the streets full of women selling flowers from the villages beyond Neuilly and Vincennes. It was almost the best time of year. There was the usual food shortage in shop windows and the usual abundance under the counter. The weather was moving into the slow pace of summer after the swift unfolding and excitement of spring; the political atmosphere was slack and fairly peaceful. Two days ago we had had the General Election which followed the country's rejection of the first draft constitution, and the relaxed aftermath of this outpouring of effort and emotion was in tune with the weather. It was a moment for reflection, for walking in parks and along the Seine, for staring into the shelves of the booksellers' kiosks and considering wistfully the books one would never read, for going to *salons.*

There are a still a few *salons* in Paris. One comes upon them in the retiring elegance of quiet streets at Longchamps, where the widows of the great have immured their memories of the past within high walls of disdain for all that has happened since. Thin tea with lemon spices, the talk of generals and ambassadors *en retraite.* The diplomatic failures of the Third Republic emerge from their obscurity, ancient figures stayed in butterfly collars and dark sober dress, and flutter for a moment beneath the chandeliers. One comes upon them, but rarely, in the shuttered streets of the Faubourg St. Germain, the conversation here a little different, racier, of a more literary and less diplomatic flavour, Orleanist and therefore not entirely without hope. Commerce has her place; and the *Revue des Deux Mondes* is not forgotten.

The General Election was two days ago, and I turned into the courtyard of an *hôtel* in the Faubourg St. Germain. The Communists had yielded first place to the M.R.P., the Progressive Catholics; and the *salon* was rustling with the news. It was said that the tide had turned, that the Communists had reached the apex of their power, that they would now decline and France come in to her own again. A gentleman who possessed a large factory in the North-East, and who would not have been admitted, perhaps, in spite of the quality of his conversation, to the Bourbon exclusiveness of Madame X's at Longchamps, hooked firm fingers on to my lapel. "The importance of all this," he said, "is that we have at last raised the mortgage of the Resistance. We have destroyed that myth."

It was a well-turned remark. The more one thought about it the more truthful it seemed. The story of French politics since the Liberation has unfolded the gradual destruction of the hopes and plans which had been centred in the Resistance, has tilted the balance slowly but surely against those who risked their lives, during the occupation, for the chance of rebuilding the French State, has whitewashed the near-traitors and the collaborators, and blackened the men whom the Germans called "terrorists." It is natural that the Faubourg St. Germain should see this process as a necessary condition of recovery for the France it knows and represents, just as it is natural that the extreme Right Wing party, the *Parti Républicain de la Liberté*, should call itself "the party of reconciliation between Frenchmen." The men of Munich and of Vichy have crept back into politics, and reluctance to accept them has degenerated in time from shocked amazement to cynical indifference. France is getting back to normalcy. The mortgage on treason, high or low, is fast being lifted.

The texture of political life is changing. At the end of the war the Fourth Republic was clearly something new and individually distinct; to-day the distinction from the Third Republic is hard to make and harder still to believe in. Two years ago the great majority of the active people of France—those who had produced the Resistance and hoped of it a new lease of life for French democracy—were allied together in the great compromise represented by the National Council of Resistance. The coalition of Socialists, Communists and M.R.P. was no mere paper thing; it stood for the years of battle and conspiracy; it remembered a long list of men and women who had died in its service. It held some promise of durability. Even de Gaulle's arrogance and contempt could not destroy but only weaken it.

To-day this compromise has ceased to mean a constructive spirit of co-operation. If it exists at all it is little more than a convenient formula for parliamentary bargaining. For over a year now the man whom the Resistance served so loyally and bore so high, seeing the Council and all it stood for dying of inanition, has done nothing but shout for "national unity." The Council had meant national unity, a unity of the working-class, the peasants, and the commercial middle-class, the only unity that matters in France to-day. Any other unity must mean unity without, and therefore against, one or other of these components. No one doubts what de Gaulle's unity would mean.

But unity without the Communists means the end of parliamentary democracy. One-third of the electorate—and that the most highly organised and most productive third—has voted Communist or near-Communist in the last three General Elections. Government without them must soon degenerate into government against them; parliamentary democracy would not survive the experience.

There is no mystery in why the Council died. Neither the M.R.P. nor the Socialists believed that it could or should continue to live, the first from respect, not to say servility, towards de Gaulle, the second from dislike if not hatred of the Communists. The three-party coalition persisted in the circumstances surprisingly long, and achieved surprisingly much. De Gaulle helped in this by presenting himself always as a misunderstood President of the United States in contrast with, and hampered and humiliated by, a stupid and insubordinate Congress. His resignation in January, 1946, brought the coalition effectively to an end, for it meant that from then onwards he would react on single members of the coalition, leaving the Socialists, who held the middle position and thus the leadership, to rock from one side to the other and eventually upset the boat. Even so, all three parties remained in office under Gouin and then Bidault until, in December, 1946, Blum formed his single-party Socialist Government which was followed by a five-party coalition under Ramadier from which, in May this year, the Communists reluctantly withdrew.

It is no accident that this general decay in political life, the return to open party conflict linked with the reappearance of that "other France" which tolerated the Germans and saw in them a defence against the Left, should bring with it a wave of general discontent. The urban workers have felt a steady worsening in their standard of life at precisely the time when they are denied effective political representation. The Communists have been consistently debarred by the other parties from occupying the key ministerial posts to which their strength in the country fully entitles them; the relief with which the other parties met their withdrawal from the Ramadier Government was scarcely edifying. Even the strongest union discipline—and the C.G.T. seems to have gone to the limit of the tactically possible in trying to contain the strike movement—could not prevent dissatisfaction from taking an active form.

The atmosphere to-day is therefore one of social discontent and political frustration. But to diagnose from this the symptoms of approaching civil war is to mistake the French mood. There is no revolutionary situation in France; the Right is too weak to mount a *coup d'état* and the Left has no interest in doing so. The economic foundations of the new Republic have been laid far more securely than the political superstructure. Important industries have passed under national control; the unions have become an integral part of social life. The attempt to isolate the Communists has failed.

A parliamentary compromise is still perfectly possible. But there are a number of essential conditions for its success. The first is that the Socialists and the M.R.P. should reconcile themselves to co-operation with a strong working-class party on their Left, and enable the Constitution to work as it was intended: that is, to evoke governments which really mean to modify the structure of French society in line with present-day realities. The new Republic must go forward or die: society is a living thing, and its laws demand progress. In the end France must have her Labour Government, her government of the working-class, of the unions, of a combination of Socialists and Communists and all who will support them. Otherwise de Gaulle will climb back into power, the Faubourg St. Germain will have its way; and the old ladies and gentlemen will clatter down the streets of Paris in the coach-and-four of clerical dictatorship they have been hailing for so long.

Another essential condition is that there should be no foreign intervention. The Socialists and the M.R.P. are so absorbed in eager denunciation of the telephoned orders which they affirm that Thorez receives every morning from the Soviet Embassy that they forget to explain their own close relations with questing American business. The Americans back de Gaulle as their French bulwark to Communism; the French middle-class seems glad enough to forfeit the hard-won liberty of France if Communism—and that means the working-class—can be kept under. It is perhaps too much to expect that the Americans should see that their policy tends to divide the country and to pave the way for civil war. Their people abroad are nearly always passionately anti-Communist. But it is of the highest importance that the British should not blindly follow the Americans in this. A divided France means a France in bondage: even Mr. Marshall's dollars are not worth that.

REACTION IN CHINA

(From a Chinese Correspondent)

The Central Government of China was reorganised by the Kuomintang Party to meet the conditions laid down by Marshall when he left China. The first reaction was a steep increase of prices which had remained relatively stable for two months after the resignation of T. V. Soong. In some circles the unfriendly reaction of the market was regarded as a challenge of the right-wing of the KMT, the C.C. Clique, which had been denounced by Marshall as reactionary and been accused of sabotaging the American effort of mediation. Whether the C.C. Clique was responsible for the rapid increases in May is, however, of little importance, since inflation is inevitable under conditions of civil war in a country already devastated.

The danger of the May crisis lay in its effect on the price of the poorest quality food, which bore most hardly on the poorest section of the population. Within three weeks, cornflour, eaten by peasants and coolies, has increased from N.C. $400 to N.C. $2,800 per catty (1¼ lb.) in Peiping. True to Chinese tradition, rice riots followed and hungry masses of people confiscated hoardings of rice. In an agrarian economy, social disorder and rice riots cannot be suppressed by force. Ancient wisdom admits the hopelessness of fighting the hungry masses. But the present rulers of China do not profit by the warnings of their ancestors. They hope that American aid will come to save them from losing face as well as power.

The new Premier, Chang Chen, endorsed by Marshall, confessed publicly in the People's Consultative Council that he had no power to perform miracles. In private, he told his friends that the fate of his Cabinet will be decided by three "lao-ye": Tien lao-ye (Heavenly father), Yang lao-ye (Foreign father, Americans), and Pin lao-ye (soldierly father)—in other words, a good harvest, an American loan and a military victory against the Communists. Unfortunately the three lao-ye have shown no sign of grace. Bright and burning sun overlooks the vast war-torn plains of North China, not one night of rain has refreshed the young shoots of wheat. Drought is threatened.

The lavish Americans, in spite of their devotion to the Truman doctrine, are reluctant to give the 500-million-dollar loan, which has been promised so many times in the last year. The thirsty Chinese Government had already counted upon that sum when they issued the internal loan on a dollar basis. The nervous Central News Agency frequently cables from Washington that the loan is impending, but the loan is still out of reach. Lastly, the Pin lao-ye disappointed the hopeful Prime Minister. The capture of Yenan was a military blunder. It was a political move to show the American Government and the public that the KMT was strong enough to capture the Red Capital. But the victorious army found the famous city evacuated. It looked like a trap. It was. Shortly afterwards the Communist Army were easily able to enter the richer lands of Shansi because their opponents had moved into Shensi to capture Yenan. They exchanged places and the Communists gained. Simultaneously, the Communists started local offensives on all fronts, from Manchuria to Shantung and Inner Mongolia. The KMT Army found itself out-manoeuvred and on the defensive. The new Premier has reason to say that without the help of the three lao-ye's he cannot perform miracles.

Miracle or no miracle, the starving people cannot live on under such conditions. Rice riots are the protest of the unorganised masses. But among the better-organised part of the population, the workers, although few in numbers and closely watched by Government agents, threaten to strike unless the ban is lifted on the wage increases. The demands of the workers were quickly followed by strikes in the faculties of several universities, which are closely linked with the KMT; students in the universities of Shanghai and Chekiang also went on strike on trivial pretexts. Observers interpreted these strikes as a further tactical challenge by the C.C. Clique to the new Premier and Minister of Education, who is also a rival of the C.C. The students used violence and even held up the train from Shanghai to Nanking for more than one day. The police and the army did not interfere.

These demonstrations by the reactionary forces within their own party were, however, staged at the wrong time. The grievance of the people overflowed the issue of petty politics and they cried out with one voice against hunger and war. Although the reactionaries at once withdrew their support and proclaimed that the movement had changed from its "right" course, popular demand for peace overwhelmed the country under KMT control. Practically all the universities and colleges joined the strike. In every big city, Shanghai, Nanking, Peiping, Tientsin, Hangchow, Canton, Kunming, students demonstrated against the civil war. At the present moment, the students have returned to their studies, but the mass movement may break out again at any moment. Civil war continues; inflation continues; there is little probability that the students, the best-organised section of the Chinese people, will remain quiet and undisturbed.

The hope of a peaceful settlement of the Chinese civil war is faint. The KMT is seriously divided. The militarists and reactionaries know that any peace settlement will be to their disadvantage. They sabotaged the American peace efforts. They drove the Communist representatives from the Government area. They captured Yenan and closed the door to peace. They suppressed liberal papers and have closed down three outspoken dailies in Shanghai as an indication of their determination to fight on. Inside the KMT there are less fanatical people who encourage the peace movement outside the KMT. But they are not in power. The Generalissimo is as stubborn as a monument. No pressure of any kind seems to move him one inch towards modern ideas and liberalism. On the Communist side, their determination is as strong as their opponents. There is no need for them to attempt peace talks and they know from experience that no result will be achieved.

American prestige has declined ever since the failure of the attempts at mediation. Suspicion that America's sympathies lie with the KMT is widespread. At present it is extremely difficult to explain to young students that America's intention is to build a democratic China. No one will believe that the American Government will tolerate a coalition government with strong Communist representation in China; they reply by pointing to the Truman doctrine. There is much confusion about American policy. The KMT wonders why the American government holds up the promised loan which they need to destroy the Communists. The Communists are certain that the Americans are backing the KMT. Therefore American interest in peace would surprise both parties.

Only a miracle will lead China to peace. Such a miracle does not seem likely to arise from China's own soil. It is difficult to say how long the fighting will go on. Some optimists think six months. The result is probably in favour of the revolutionary side, but this may not be true. The speedy lowering of the living conditions of the people will cause trouble for any government that tries to bring order to China. A military victory on either side will not solve the problems of the Chinese population.

THE WASTE LAND

Mass Observation has recently been commissioned by the Ethical Union to conduct an inquiry into and to prepare a report upon the religious beliefs and opinions of people living in a London suburb entitled Metrop. Questions were also asked which throw light upon people's attitude to morals, politics and "progress." The results, which have just been published*, contain little which, I imagine, would surprise readers of this journal.

About one person in ten in Metrop is associated more or less closely with some Church, while about two-thirds never go to Church at all. Of the Church-goers, less than one-third give definite assent "to three basic affirmations of the Apostles' Creed" and over forty per cent "express doubt about the possibility of an afterlife." There is, however, a general attitude of good will towards religion, expressing itself in the conviction of the majority that religion should be taught in schools—we don't believe it ourselves, but it is just possible there may be something in it and we might as well be on the safe side and give the children the benefit of the doubt, especially as it doesn't cost anything—coupled with hostility to the established Churches and a vague "personal religious faith."

The Churches are censured because they are mere appendages of the State and, therefore, apologists for State policy and, more particularly, for war; because they are identified with the maintenance of the political and economic *status quo*—a little out of date this last charge, one cannot help feeling, especially since 1945—because they don't move with the times; and because parsons don't practise what they preach.

Christianity is, for most, a not very interesting mystery; it would be difficult to say whether ignorance in regard to its doctrines is or is not more marked than scepticism in regard to their truth. "Easter? What is it in aid of?" asked a factory worker, while opinions as to Christ himself varied between the views that He did not exist, that He was "just a carpenter" and that He was "quite a good chap" but "nothing extra," and, most surprisingly, that He was "a lady." Although, however, they don't believe in Christianity, most people believe, or would like to believe in something. It is perhaps for this reason that the general attitude to religion is characterised by a benevolent tolerance:—"Many people look upon religion as something quite harmless and purely personal—an innocuous hobby, like collecting stamps." Although only one in four openly doubts His existence, it is rarely that there is any definite belief in God, who is invoked, if at all, in times of crisis for much the same reason as prompts the atheist to pray as the ship goes down. The general conclusion of Mass Observation is that "ordinary people are looking for something to believe in"; their condition is one of wistful agnosticism.

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* *Puzzled People. Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

"People," the Report concludes, "cannot carry on for long in their profoundly negative frame of mind" — and this because of a comparatively new feature in the contemporary situation, scepticism in regard to science and scepticism in regard to progress. As the report points out, these scepticisms are not two scepticisms but one scepticism, since most people have come to identify science with progress. Their unspoken thoughts run much as follows:—(i) Science is advancing. (ii) Science means progress. (iii) Science is doing more harm than good; therefore (iv) Progress is bad and ought to be stopped and is expressed in such phrases as: "Mankind's progressing to destroy itself, I should say." "I think we are going round in circles." "We're going forward, though not in the right direction."

The common view seems to be that science is being abused and misdirected with the result that in the end it will destroy us. Hence, our generation is accused of being too clever, of going too far and too fast, or choosing wrong ends and so on, the tendency being to compare the social and moral atmosphere of our day unfavourably with that of thirty or even twenty years ago.

When all allowance is made for the effects of the war, and in wartime the Ten Commandments are always the first casualties, it is hard to resist the conclusion that in most people's view progress has somehow gone awry, and that life is not so much worth living as it used to be. Hitherto the gap which has been left by the decline of orthodox Christianity has been partially filled by a belief in "progress." As the view of the next world grew hazier, the prospects for this one grew brighter. Man's future was in his own hands and assisted by science he could be trusted to shape it to his own liking. The disappearance of this belief has been to leave men's minds a waste land, empty of hope, lacking in ideals, devoid of aspirations; in a word, scepticism, apathy and disillusion go wider and cut deeper than they have ever done before.

At this point the conclusions of the Report suggest a new thought. A common factor which plays its part in inducing all these scepticisms and disillusions is the size of the organisations by which people's lives are to-day controlled. "Current loss of faith (in religion, in politics, in progress, in science, and so on) is very largely a loss of faith in the unwieldy, centralised, remote *organisation* which increasingly monopolises the potential realisation of ideals and which seems so distant and uncontrollable to ordinary people."

I think this is right; people want to feel that they count and that their wills and wishes can be made to matter; that it is within the bounds of possibility that they should be able to influence the course of events in however humble a sphere. In the old days the Church, and still more the Chapel, gave them this sense; so did the embryo political organisation of the then idealistic and aspiring Labour Movement. Now, for a variety of reasons, neither religion nor politics fills the bill and people have the feeling that they are puppets twitched into weal and woe by invisible showmen who pull the strings. Their reaction is cynicism, apathy and disillusion.

Let us suppose that one deplores this state of affairs and would like to see it amended. So far as religious belief is concerned there are broadly three alternatives: first, a new revelation, secondly, a synthetic world of religion, thirdly, contriving to make do as best we can with the religion that we have.

Of these the first need not detain us; if it comes, it comes and it comes quite literally in God's good time, not ours.

The chances of the second I find as improbable as its prospect is unattractive. The things which unite mankind are apt to be negative—one is tempted sometimes to wonder whether there is anything international that is also positive save villainy—and a creed which represented the lowest common multiple—or should it be the highest common factor?—of religions would be so flatly general as to amount to no more than an admission that the world of spatio-temporal events is not the only world and an admonition to be nice to other people. Such a creed would not fill the vacuum which has been left by the decay of religious belief and I doubt if it would affect by a hair's breadth the actions of any who, hitherto creedless, embraced it. One is driven back, therefore, to the possibilities of our own religion. Is there any prospect that it will again attract the belief of any substantial number of our fellow-countrymen? This question cannot, I think, be answered. Nevertheless, it is possible to point to certain conditions which must be satisfied, if it is to be answered in the affirmative.

These are conditions not only for a revived belief in Christianity but for a revival of interest in and respect for the Churches; for—let us be frank about it—most of us cannot maintain any distinctive religious belief and practice unless we are members of an organisation; unless, in fact, we belong to a Church.

First, the Church must no longer insist upon the importance of *all* the Bible. The religion of one age is apt to be the literary entertainment of the next and there are many parts of the Bible which this generation finds frankly amusing—Jonah and the Whale, for example—just as there are others, for example, Lot and his daughters, which it finds mildly pornographic. It is difficult to see what is to be gained by teaching such things to the young or by reading them to adults in Church.

But this, secondly, does not mean the ever-increasing appeasement of science by cutting everything out of the Bible which offends against so-called natural law. The Church has already surrendered so much territory to the scientists that if the process of appeasement goes any further it will have none left and Christianity will subside into the injunction to be nice to our neighbours. Some things, it is obvious, must be retained even if the scientists don't like it. People would not believe in God at all unless they were permitted to believe in Him unscientifically.

Thirdly, the paid exponents of the teaching of Christ should not waste their energies in inter-denominational disputes about points of doctrine, or concern themselves with matters of ritual and ceremony which bore the layman.

Fourthly, they should speak in a natural voice and not drone in an irritating sing-song and they should be audible.

Fifthly, the Church should so conduct itself that it is no longer identified in men's minds with the maintenance of the *status quo* in politics and economics. This means that it should cut the cable of the State connection and so emancipate itself from the necessity of supporting the State whenever it deems the mass slaughter of the citizens of some other State desirable.

This, of course, may mean that parsons would be poor, poorer even than they are now. It would also mean the loss of the support of some rich pew-holders. But parsons would win the respect of many who might be prepared to pay attention to Christianity when they saw the clergy practising the doctrines which they preach.

I do not suggest for a moment that the satisfaction of these conditions is sufficient to produce a revival of the Churches; nevertheless, I believe it to be a necessary consideration.

C. E. M. JOAD

The Arts and Entertainment

EMBARRAS DE RICHESSE

EACH of four exhibitions I have been to calls for at least five times as much space as I can give to it. First, the splendid exhibition at the Victoria and Albert of miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver, for which we must be deeply grateful to the energy and taste of the museum authorities and to the generosity of owners. Hilliard may be thought the last of the great Gothic artists: influenced though he was by Holbein and Clouet, he retained at the courts of Elizabeth and James I a candour and delicacy that take one back to the *Dame à la licorne*. His pupil, Oliver, on the other hand, learnt so much from Renaissance Italians and Flemings that his work often marries unhappily two idioms: there are heads that already suggest Van Dyck or Jan Steen.

Most of us are unused to looking at miniatures—no branch of art has fallen into more dismal decay, and this may prevent us from recognising the full stature of Hilliard. (I recommend visitors to take with them a magnifying glass.) Though Hilliard, like almost all professional portraitists, sometimes reveals boredom, he seems to me among the finest painters this country has produced. His calligraphy reveals a national characteristic that was conspicuous already before the Conquest. The effects he obtains, however, are often intense and even morbid. As the exemplary catalogue points out, he shows us "the prototypes of Romeo and Juliet, Bosola and the Duchess of Malfi," and "in the very years when Shakespeare was writing his sonnets, Hilliard mirrors one characteristic aspect of the Elizabethan age—its admiration of male virtues." (*Virtues*, I suggest, must be regarded as a euphemism meaning *beauties*.) This artist, who seems to have known Ronsard, uses water-colour as the contemporary lyrists used verse, to pay idolatrous homage: a medieval style here expresses a Renaissance humanism. The miniatures, no less important to the historian than to the aesthete, are excellently displayed at the end of a gallery filled with Elizabethan embroideries, portraits and furniture. How puzzling that men whose clothes and jewellery, paintings and poetry were so exquisitely wrought could endure furniture as coarse in craftsmanship as it is uncouth in design!

The Wellington relics, also at the V. and A., are a foretaste of what we are to enjoy at Apsley House through the unsurpassed generosity of the present Duke. One cannot help wishing that Waterloo had been won thirty years earlier, for the so sumptuous silver and porcelain reflects an early stage of the decay in the applied arts that, beginning with the French Revolution, has continued ever since at increasing speed. Contrast, for instance, the "George" made for Marlborough with the Collar of Honour designed by the Regent. One of the most felicitously splendid objects is the baton presented by the Czar. The pictures include, beside the marvellous Velasquezs and Goyas recently shown in the National Gallery, a Correggio that is justly famous. This fascinating exhibition, expressive of European gratitude, would make me, if I were either Eisenhower or Montgomery, feel a little pensive, not to say sour.

Wildenstein's are showing for the benefit of Merchant Seamen an outstanding assembly of 17th-century French pictures including a number of works one would like to see lodged in the National Gallery. Le Sueur, for example, is much greater than his English reputation. The mainstay of the show is provided by the Poussins and Claudes from Chatsworth and Holkham, which look like princes kidnapped by gypsies, so caked are they with dirt. (Even the marvellous *Enchanted Castle* is sadly waiting, poor thing, for *les soins de la personne*.)

And this brings me to the Dulwich pictures at the National Gallery, most of which can now be seen properly for the first time in living memory. I wish to keep out of any controversy between the respective champions of the Dulwich and National Gallery cleanings. I note only that for some reason the Dulwich Philip IV seems to have a lot of spots of varnish still disfiguring the blondness of the Habsburg skin. The Poussins, on the other hand, are radiantly fresh; every trace of what the President of the Royal Academy optimistically calls "mystery" has been removed. Similarly the large Van Dyck has been stripped of the dirt that mercifully veiled its defects, and some of the Cuyps have lost the famous "golden glow" which they owed to 18th century varnish and reveal the artist as a master of cool harmonies. One result is to emphasise the disgusting condition of the Dulwich Gainsboroughs and of very many paintings in the neighbouring rooms of the National Gallery.

Roger Marvell

GLYNDEBOURNE

Both Benjamin Britten's previous operas have triumphed over obstacles imposed by the librettist; *Albert Herring*, on the other hand, owes much of its success to the skill and comic invention of the book. Eric Crozier has acclimatised the un-English outlines of Maupassant's satirical tale with extraordinary success. The crowning of a May King in Suffolk may sound an unlikely proceeding; but the events, as we watch them unfold, remain well within the limits of comic licence, just as the characters, even those which are most evidently stock types, never descend into the merely facetious. From these dangers both librettist and composer are saved by their feeling for the charm and poetry of life in a small East Anglian market town in the halcyon days of 1900; the picture is filled in with many small affectionate touches, and an aroma of good humour, like the smell of fresh hay, arises from text and score alike.

Throughout the three acts Britten's musical invention remains brilliantly resourceful. He can distil music out of anything—children playing ball, street corner whistling, an attack of the hiccups. At his most successful moments, fun and musical invention are completely fused. If I were to describe the little episode in which Miss Wordsworth, the school teacher, rehearses her charges in their song of welcome to Albert Herring, it would sound like a catalogue of every comic stage effect ever used in this sort of scene; but each one of these effects—each injunction of Miss Wordsworth and each successive failure of her pupils—is so magically embedded in the musical substance that the total result is not only a smash hit with any audience, but a piece of music to which, if it were recorded, one could listen again and again with delight. Then there is the Vicar's aria in the first act, irresistibly comic with its sanctimonious repeated wood-wind chords and its eloquent pauses, and at the same time a charming piece of lyrical music. More remarkable still is the solemn threnody for the supposedly dead Albert in the last act, a piece obviously inserted so as to prepare for the *coup de théâtre* of his disreputable re-appearance, but reaching a high pitch of eloquence in its own right. It is such moments as these which make it a superficial judgment to write the work off as a farce or a charade; and there are other passages, such as the Handelian or Purcellian ensembles introduced by Lady Billows's majestic pronouncements, which, though more or less parodistic in manner, are constructed with beautifully solid workmanship. On the other hand, though the flow of musical ideas is unflagging, each one of them is apt to be short-winded. No doubt the composer deliberately accepted this restriction in order to ensure a rapid and fluid action; and in this he has been entirely successful, for the acts, though long for comedy, pass like a flash; nevertheless the ear sometimes wishes for more of those sustained and cumulative musical structures which have always been the glory of comic opera. The only serious drawback in a delightful evening's entertainment is the frequent inaudibility of the text. This is, of course, one of opera's perpetual demons, and the singers usually get the blame. Though they did far better on the second night than on the first, they have a difficult task. On paper it would seem a relatively simple thing to make your words tell across an orchestra of twelve instead of seventy; but the preponderance of wind and percussion sets problems of which the composer seems insufficiently aware when (for instance) he allows the "clue" word of a phrase to coincide with a little wind-and-percussion *sforzando* which quite drowns the vital consonants. I need scarcely mention, for those who heard *The Rape of Lucretia*, with what variety and imagination the chamber orchestra is used.

The performance is wildly amusing. If I cavil a little at the too farcical appearance of the police constable and the too fussy acting of Lady Billows's housekeeper, I have otherwise nothing but praise for the stylised late Victorian profusion of John Piper's designs (above all, those clothes!), and the witty and inventive production of Frederick Ashton. The cast is headed by Joan Cross's Ruth Draper-ish *grande dame* and the dear big booby boy of Peter Pears, both of them genuine comic creations; Nancy Evans and Frederick Sharp make a warm pair of village lovers; William Parsons, as the Vicar, is so true that he hardly seems to be acting at all; while as for Margaret Ritchie's prim schoolmistress, her flute-like tones convey such a sense of goodness and innocent rapture that our laughter is almost dissolved into love.

Orfeo must be discussed more briefly than I should wish. Without being equal to the best of the pre-war Busch performances, it is a well cast and impressive revival of a neglected masterpiece, which no one should miss who can help it. Indeed I have never enjoyed the music of Gluck's third act so much as on this occasion: a result due, not to the dancing and stage designs (which were mostly regrettable), but to the excellence of the musical ensemble, and in particular to the vivid Euridice of Ann Ayars and the striking Amor of Zoë Vlachopoulos. This Greek soprano has some shrill notes of the kind that are unpopular in England, but she moulded every phrase of her brief part with a Mediterranean shapeliness, precision and point. Kathleen Ferrier has the great merit of looking well, and her performance is never less than sincere and dignified (except when Mr. Fritz Stiedry raced her through "Che farò"); but I cannot pretend that I found it thrilling. If she could bring the top five or six notes of her voice into a smoother relationship with her noble lower octave, breathe more quietly, abandon the lingering traces of oratorio hoot and take a few tips in the matter of expressive phrasing from little Amor, this intelligent, modest and sympathetic artist could turn herself into an Orfeo whom one would never forget.

Desmond S iawe-Taylor

RADIO NOTES

No War in Troy may not be the late Jean Giraudoux's best play (*Electra* is more eloquent, *Ondine* more imaginative), but it is streets ahead of Anglo-Saxon attempts to follow the Shavian lead. French wit being quicker than ours, their satire treads more lightly; and although in this instance the author deliberately avoids poetic speech (except in a few passages), the interplay of character and action is so contrived as to create a poetic impression. Since Giraudoux was conspicuously an admirer of English literature and aimed, in his novels, at the effects of English lyrical prose, his style seems to lend itself to translation into our language. At all events, Miss Cynthia Pughe, in collaboration with the author's son, has made the dialogue of this play sound very natural, so that the delicate character drawing has not had to penetrate a jungle of translatorese.

Giraudoux has based his argument squarely on four main personalities: Hector, Andromache, Helen and Ulysses. Roughly speaking, each pair represents its country, Troy or Greece. Replying to the criminally foolish Demokos' insistence that it is cowardice not to prefer death for one's country to

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any other, Andromache speaks for Troy: "When one has lived worthily, actively, wisely in one's country, by the same token one dies for it." And Hector backs up this speech, later in the play, by stigmatising war as "the most sordid and hypocritical method of equalising human beings," and death as inadmissible either as a punishment for cowardice or as a reward for life. Mr. Francis de Wolff made this capital speech tell; but although his performance gained weight in the course of the play he did not wholly succeed in uniting the contrary elements of this Hector, torn between the idea of himself-as-hero and a disillusioned appreciation of the way things really happen. For the moral of this clever and gripping play (it first appeared in 1935) is that war occurs because everybody will behave as if it were inevitable. As a symbol of irresponsibility Giraudoux's Helen offsets his Andromache very nicely. Like Hitler, she is a sleep-walker who follows her own nose. Miss Valerie White played the part with a catlike relish that was delightful to listen to: her slow, level tones wove a sensual spell which—rather than formal beauty—was probably Helen's secret.

This play went so well on the air that it hardly seemed like an adaptation. There is no complicated action that it is important we should follow with our eyes; the transitions are very simple; the drama is all—or nearly all—in the words. And the brief excursions into fantasy—the appearance of Peace (admirably spoken by Miss Penelope Davidson), the descent of Iris—were all the better for the absence of stage machinery. At the beginning of the play I feared Mr. Val Gielgud had let things rip: the first scene was much too loud, the satirical points were too emphatically made. But to a large extent these faults soon disappeared; and although to my mind the whole performance could have afforded to be *drier*, it had the great virtues of Mr. Gielgud's productions: smoothness and consistency.

The Third ought gradually to broadcast most of Giraudoux's plays—at any rate *Electra*, *Intermezzo*, and that exquisitely humorous and touching fantasy, *Ondine* (with Miss Peggy Ashcroft, or perhaps Miss Vivien Leigh, in the name part).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"The Perils of Pauline," at the Plaza
"They Made Me a Fugitive," at Warners
"Sinbad the Sailor," at the Odeon, Marble Arch

The Perils of Pauline goes back twenty-five years in search of Miss Pearl White and the weekly serial. The Kinema it was called in those days; to the world it presented a stuccoed niche or shell, in the middle of which, like an ice-cream cone, was the paybox; on either side rose stairways surmounted by the masks of comedy and tragedy. We collected there, more or less surreptitiously, just before 2. Once inside we devoured the programme (price 1d.) and sucked acid-drops. The pianist arrived smoking a necessary cigarette. He went on chain-smoking, but always one hand at least would keep the accompaniment going to Keystone cops, cowboys and Indians, Charlie on the rink, Nazimova as Salome, a silent *Hamlet*, Felix the Cat, and Miss White herself in Part Umpteen of *The Exploits of Elaine*. The serial possessed two huge advantages: it never lost pace, and week after week it brought down a curtain on situations that left the spectators gasping. These dangers and absurdities have provided moments of fun in *The Perils of Pauline*, but I can't help wishing some other means than noise and Technicolor had been found to recapture the thrills of black-and-white. I don't know that to-day's popular jabber is altogether an advance on yesterday's silence. However, Miss Betty Hutton as "queen of the serials" lies down on railway tracks and sails away in balloons, and with the night-club idiom of 1947 makes an eye-filling, ear-splitting appeal.

It was high time that our Black Market found itself on a screen. The Soho gang of *They Made Me a Fugitive* operates from an undertaker's shop, and there are some prettily sardonic touches with black plumes, texts, cocaine-filled coffins, and the letters R.I.P. on the rooftop. One enjoys the local colour of dark rainy alleys, a non-stop revue theatre, and the stunted tart always looking for a light. The idiom, too, with its gibes about free enterprise and sherbet-peddling, breaks new ground. Mr. Trevor Howard makes a good honest crook (ex-R.A.F.) and Mr. Griffith Jones a good limousine rat, while Miss Sally Gray (when she gets the chance) dances and devotes herself appealingly. Yet we are never quite convinced by this Soho or by the personages in a plot that has too many conventional turns. Cavalcanti directs a curiously uneven script in which too much of the repartee falls to one part of the action and too little to another, and there tend to be wooden moments when the characters face one another within four walls. On the other hand he has realized some admirable sequences in night streets, on moors and quaysides, and behind the scenes of revudeville. *They Made Me a Fugitive* rarely succeeds in matching the Hollywood gangster legend, but it is a film both enjoyable and exciting.

To return to old fashions, Mr. Douglas Fairbanks junior has had to adopt a ballet technique for his capers in *Sinbad the Sailor*. He foils the palace minions or dives over battlements almost as irreproachably as did his father, who never had to extricate himself from thickets of dialogue. These vary from unlimited blank verse in the Moorish manner to the more Western tang of "We'll ride the world on a Nelephant!" Needless to say, *Sinbad the Sailor* sports Technicolor.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

OUR RATIONS

SIR,—I append comments on food difficulties not mentioned in recent letters in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION and also my own experience about meat, offal, etc.

1. Nothing has been said about the extra *cost* of every meal which must be searched for in a scattered shopping area, and the trouble caused by having to go so many times in one week.

2. Spam, tongue, etc., are far too heavy on "points" for my own family of two, even when obtainable.

3. The tinned sausages are excellent, but prohibitive in price except as a treat.

4. "Offal" is supplied by my butcher according to an alphabetical rota, but once in 10-12 weeks is the usual interval. The quality of the meat has gone down steadily and he complains bitterly that corned beef is the only thing of which he gets enough.

5. I have seen *no* ham on sale for about six years, although I know it is provided in some catering establishments, open to "trippers"—local housewives complain openly about this.

6. If I want meat pies I must queue, either here, or in Grimsby (return fare 8*d*.) and the last I had was an "abomination of desolation."

7. Even in a "fish" area we have less choice than in 1939 (I was only able to buy mackerel twice last summer), and a good "nose" for fillets, too long on ice, is a *sine qua non*. They may look eatable but stink the house out; 50 per cent of the Arctic cod I queued for in the last years of war was uneatable due to bad icing.

8. I disagree with every one of Joan H. M. Roe's points except No 4.

9. If Sir Hartley Shawcross's margarine and butter are needed for the baby it is a foregone conclusion that the latter's rations are insufficient. I note that

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Company Meetings

CABLE AND WIRELESS (HOLDING)

WIDER SPREAD OF INVESTMENTS

THE eighteenth ordinary general meeting of Cable and Wireless (Holding), Limited, was held on June 25th in London, Sir Edward Wilshaw, K.C.M.G. (the Governor) presiding.

The Governor said that this was the first occasion upon which he addressed the stockholders since the Government's expressed intention to nationalise Cable and Wireless, Limited (the Operating Company) was implemented on January 1st last. The shares owned by their company in Cable and Wireless, Limited, had now become the property of H.M. Government, and the control of the cable and wireless telecommunications system had passed from their hands. The other matter of outstanding interest during the year was the sale of their shareholding in Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co., Ltd., to the English Electric Co., Ltd.

Turning to the consolidated balance sheet, they would see that the securities held at December 31st, 1946, had a book value of £9,974,125 and a market value at that time of £11,274,700, an appreciation of about 13 per cent. The comparable figure at the end of 1945, eliminating the securities held by the Operating Company, was about 4½ per cent. The profits realised during the year amounted to £322,458, compared with £208,280, an increase of £114,178.

After a careful consideration of the position, the policy of the directors had been to spread the companies' investments over a still wider field, and in making each choice to endeavour to hold a reasonable balance between caution and enterprise. The results shown were very satisfactory, but it would be generally agreed, he felt sure, that with the present uncertainties prevailing and all the hindrances to productive work and enterprise it was difficult to be confident about the economic outlook.

It was not possible to make any statement at this meeting regarding the effect of the acquisition by the Government of the shares in the Operating Company upon the Holding Company's affairs. Under the Cable and Wireless Act it was provided that failing agreement on the price to be paid for the shares a tribunal should be established to fix the compensation. Attempts to reach agreement with H.M. Treasury had been unsatisfactory, and the matter would therefore be referred to an Arbitration Tribunal. They did not expect that Tribunal to sit before the autumn.

In reply to a question as to what the Board proposed to do when they received from the Government the stock to be paid for the Stock of the Operating Co., he said that it would appear to him that at some stage a scheme of arrangement would have to be made between the Preference and the Ordinary stockholders for a readjustment of the present position. It would be impossible to do that before they knew the amount and the terms and conditions of the Stock to be issued by the Government. Stockholders would be consulted before any decisive step was taken.

The report was adopted.

MARKS & SPENCER

LARGER PROFITS AND DIVIDEND

THE annual general meeting of Marks and Spencer, Limited, was held on June 24th in London.

Sir Simon Marks, D.Sc., chairman and joint managing director, in the course of his speech, said: It is with satisfaction that I am able to report an increase in our profits to £2,576,000, compared with £2,052,000 last year. There is available for distribution £1,881,000. We recommend a final dividend on the Ordinary and "A" Ordinary shares of 45 per cent, making 60 per cent for the year, as against 50 per cent last year.

There was a marked increase in the production of our goods in the past year, which was reflected in the expansion of our turnover and the increase in our profits. But the volume of production is still insufficient to satisfy the needs of the public, who have long subsisted on a bare margin of goods.

The bottleneck in the textile and clothing industries is yarn, which is the initial stage of cloth production. There is ample capacity in the weaving and making-up sections of the industry with their present equipment and labour force to weave the cloth and manufacture in far greater quantities the finished garments and clothes of which the people stand in such dire need. Clothing manufacturers can only partially use their resources, and are compelled to resort to short time or spasmodic working. Output is limited by the materials available, and the effect is to increase costs to the public.

The report was adopted.

he says he is able to "make up" himself, on certain meals taken out, but in the majority of cases, where it is the *mother* who goes without to help her young cormorants, she has no opportunity of doing this.

10. I may add that this is considered a fairly good area compared with some of the N.E. districts, such as that round Newcastle-on-Tyne. H. M. FISHER

SIR,—I should like to comment on some of the points raised in the letter from Joan H. M. Roe in your issue of 14th June.

As one can only go by one's personal experience in obtaining food, and this is obviously bound to vary from one district to another, it seems to me too sweeping to contradict flatly one housewife's statement of facts by comparing it with one's own experience.

I personally do not find that meat is either more varied in kind and better in quality than during the war.

I have had liver twice since January, and this week we had our first kidney (one between us) for a year. Tripe is not obtainable every day: I am lucky if I get it once in two weeks. Meat pies and bridies are plentiful, but I rarely find breakfast or liver sausage. I have never once been able to buy boiled ham since the war, and we have not had a rabbit since March. I have not seen Prem or Spam in the shops here since last summer.

As regards the letter from D. Gilchrist, it is possible that a single man has more time in which to "shop wisely" than the average housewife who, besides cooking and shopping, cleans the house, bakes, washes and irons, sews, mends her own, her husband's and children's clothes and the household linen, and works in the garden, and in many cases has infants or small children to look after, and who have to be taken out with her while she shops.

There is no time for her to go wandering from one shop to another, in search of the scarcer commodities which, no doubt, are the things which complete "a balanced diet of the greatest food value."

It has been said that food in this part of the country is more plentiful than in London. I lived in London during the war and I can honestly say that with the exception of fish, I found that the food then was more varied, more plentiful, and of better quality than it is now.

The woman in front of me in the queue yesterday complained to the butcher that her last meat ration was almost uneatable, and she had had to give most of it to her dog. She was not interested in politics nor "poisoned" by "Tory propaganda"—she was a working-class woman who wanted a decent bit of meat for her husband and children.

The present state of affairs may be inevitable, but it would do the Government no harm to listen reasonably and sympathetically to the complaints of the housewives and to be less ready to assume that these are inspired entirely by political motives—that is foolish and shortsighted.

It is the present Government's resentment of any criticism which is one of its greatest weaknesses, and which is gradually losing it the confidence of many of us who would gladly have given it all our support and encouragement. C. GRAHAM

Edinburgh.

FILMS AND QUOTAS

SIR,—Mr. Norman MacKenzie's article on Films and Quotas successfully establishes the need for the Government to give continued protection to the British film industry. It is encouraging to note that the memorandum which he cites suggests a compulsory quota for the exhibition of second-feature films. Nevertheless, admirable as the proposals are, they do not embrace all the changes which are needed for the protection of the industry as a whole, and the improvement of public entertainment. The reason for this is, no doubt, that the suggested changes emanate from the British Film Producers Association; this body is chiefly representative of the feature film-makers, and does not speak for the numerous documentary and specialised producers.

It is one of the anomalies of the film industry in this country that one of its sections, the documentary, should receive international acclaim, and yet be hardly represented in the cinemas of Britain. Equally paradoxical is the fact that the usual supporting programme, whether British or American, cannot compare in quality with to-day's British first-features. But when the major British companies are under contract to exhibit a multitude of Hollywood productions, whatever their quality, one reason for the paradox is not hard to find. Nor are these companies always prepared to pay for a documentary or independent second-feature, when they can purchase outright the cheap and shoddy articles to which we are all too accustomed. Again, the short film—all too often known as a "fill-up"—is subject to no legislation; hence the exhibition of American one-reel trash, and its indescribable British counterpart.

Documentary and specialised film producers suggest that, if the quota system is to be revised, three categories should be established; first-feature, intermediate and short. The growth of the documentary movement during the war has created favourable conditions for the production of high-quality second-feature and short films, whose manufacture, incidentally, is not necessarily retarded by lack of studio space. It is suggested that the two new quota categories would give an opportunity to this side of the industry, which, through the opposition of the feature and exhibiting concerns, it has hitherto lacked; at the same time, improvement and variety in the supporting programme would result.

However, if such legislation is to succeed, it is essential that renters be compelled to allot to the producer sufficient return for him to cover his production costs. A high-quality documentary—as opposed to the travel quickie, made almost literally by two men and a boy—is likely to cost a minimum of £3 a foot. This is little enough in comparison with the cost of features, but too much for the renter, who prefers to acquire the cheapest article available. Indeed one producer has been heard to boast that his films cost 5d. a foot. It is true that high cost is no guarantee of high quality; but there is a mean below which low cost inevitably denotes low quality; hence one's suspicion of the B.F.P.A. proposal to abolish the labour-cost test. At present, documentary films make their rare appearance on the public screen at rates which could not reimburse their producers even in years of packed audiences. A legal formula for remedying this should not be hard to find.

Not only the entire film industry of Britain, but each component of the theatre programme, must be reviewed by the Board of Trade and by Parliament. It is to be hoped that the Government, in preparing new legislation, will not be dazzled by the financial power of the big British feature-companies nor deterred by the growing and sinister intervention of American interests in the affairs of the British film industry. MICHAEL CLARKE

EQUAL PAY

SIR,—Your editorial on the above question was a frank analysis of the Government's dilemma but fell short, I think, in not laying sufficient emphasis on a point which sticks out a mile: viz., that implementation of this measure, if justly applied, would cost only a fraction of the vast sums quoted by various authorities. The confusion arises through the mistaken interpretation in the public mind as to what the rate for the job implies. One of the main factors in this confusion is the Civil Service practice of a uniform grading for both men and women employees, with its inference that any disparity in pay is attributable to sex discrimination. In fact, only in a minority of instances can it be said that women do the same work as men. To forestall any charge of anti-feminism I

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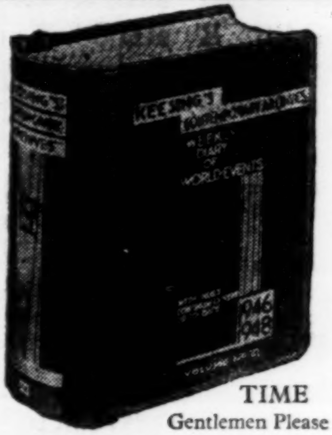

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hasten to add that (physical labour apart) it is not suggested women are inferior; it is merely that, by long tradition, a woman looks on gainful employment as an irritating necessity covering the period between leaving school and meeting the inevitable "Prince Charming" who will provide a home for her: an attitude to work which must obviously detract from her value in the labour market. Any man who works alongside women is continually aware of this divided loyalty, resulting in a disinclination to give more than partial attention to the job.

I agree that, despite the foregoing, women are relatively underpaid, and I think the Government would be well advised to narrow the gap. The cost of this, and of implementing the "rate for the job" in those cases where no possibility of doubt arises, would probably be less embarrassing to the Government than the disquiet aroused in the public mind by its refusal to act at all.

Finally, may I say I advocate the rate for the job *without* reservations. I see no reason for relating a man's pay packet to his domestic responsibilities. The single man and woman already carry an undue share of the cost of tax rebates and social services designed to ease the family man's burden (willingly acquired). Further discrimination is, in my opinion, grossly unfair.

A. M. W.

LABOUR IN THE UNIVERSITIES

Sir,—Mr. Pritt's letter is in parts too subtle for me; but insofar as I am able to understand him, I think I can detect a certain bitterness because there is a move to establish distinctive Labour organisations in the Universities. But if Mr. Pritt is an advocate of the "united" Socialist left, supporters of the Government in Oxford are quite emphatically not! We have discovered, as a matter of bitter experience, what the Labour Party officially realised some time ago, that a so-called united front with the Communists is an alliance from which the Labour Party has a great deal to lose and the Communists, as a minority movement, everything to gain. Freshmen do not complain when they find the Conservatives and Liberals in separate clubs. Must they be confused because the Labour supporters want to dissociate from the Communists?

I am willing to agree with Mr. Wright that the need for the Labour case in the Universities is as urgent as he believes; but perhaps he would agree with me that possibly one reason why the Labour Party fights shy of students is the irresponsibility that they have frequently shown in the past. The Student Labour Federation has been an example of this, the culminating instance being its resolution in 1940 which condemned the war as "imperialist." If that was the kind of support for the Labour Party that Mr. Pritt speaks of, no wonder the Labour Party preferred to be without it and proscribed the Student Labour Federation!

As for the "two Communists in a committee," I am never one to underrate the power or effectiveness of Communist infiltrationist tactics. "Social Democrat" and myself were not concerned to pay compliments to the Labour Party, but with the need for Labour support in the Universities. In Oxford, our action to this end has been to disencumber ourselves from the Communists and the Student Labour Federation and to build up a strong Labour Club. The consternation with which our action has been greeted in certain circles may be a sign for those still in doubt that our's is the right remedy.

J. R. Morris
O.U. Labour Club.

CONGO URANIUM

Sir,—In your issue of June 21st, Critic quotes a friend of his on the situation in Belgium. I should like to add one touch to the picture drawn by Critic. The published figures for import and export do not give a complete view of Belgium's trade balance because they don't take into account the sales of Uranium to the United States.

The Belgian Congo has the largest deposit of Uranium so far discovered in the world and this ore, with an average content of around 60 per cent. of metallic Uranium is nearly thirty times richer than any found elsewhere. Under the wartime agreement, which is still binding, the whole production is reserved for the United States Government.

Work on the industrial developments of nuclear energy is at present nearly at a standstill in U.S. and small quantities only of Uranium are required for military purposes. As a consequence, as, under the agreement, no Uranium may be delivered to any country but the United States, the production of Uranium ore in the Belgian Congo is at present at a very low level.

The United States Government, however, for reasons of their own, are paying for the whole potential output of the Belgian Congo, thus providing Belgium with dollar credits which neither the trade balance nor the reverse lease-lend credit accumulated at the end of the war could justify.

As a point of interest I may add that Great Britain has been allotted a small amount of Uranium from the Congo, which we buy from the United States. Belgium gets none nor, to my knowledge, any other European country.

V. Peniakoff

WHO USES THE PAPER?

Sir,—Each month, I, a commercial traveller, and my hundred or so colleagues up and down the country, are sent 200 window bills and 200 showcards. Approximately half the window bills are burnt, with some difficulty, in our back gardens. The rest go on show windows. We would like to burn them all, or send them to salvage. But we daren't do the former because investigators snoop around. And it might be equally disastrous if salvage were careless with them.

Now I am only one of hundreds, and my firm is only one of dozens doing the same sort of thing. And it is all because the publicity boys have persuaded themselves and their employers that prestige advertising must go on. And, of course it will, unless the Government does the obviously sensible thing and says: "Look, we'll put you all in the same boat, and stop prestige advertising altogether." Press, window bills, hoardings—the whole lot, including Work or Want. A lot of paper would certainly be saved, and the publicity boys and 75 per cent. of we commercial travellers could then go down the mines, or on the land. It would be good for our souls.

Commercial Traveller

W. E. HENLEY

Sir,—I am in course of preparing, for Constable and Company Ltd., a book on W. E. Henley, provisionally entitled "Henley and his Circle." Messrs. Constable have placed at my disposal a large number of letters written by Henley to Charles Whibley, his friend and literary assistant over many years. These, taken in conjunction with his work as critic, poet and editor, must form the basis of the study which I am undertaking.

I should be grateful, however, if anyone who possesses any letters or manuscripts by Henley would be good enough to lend them to me or let me have access to them.

John Connell

25 Brookfield, Highgate West Hill,
London, N.6.

LABOUR CONFERENCE REPORTS

Sir,—I am now engaged upon the sequel to my *British Working-Class Politics*, 1832-1914. The new volume will cover the development of Labour politics from 1914 to the present time. My file of Labour Party Conference reports lacks the following annual volumes—1920, 1924, 1925, 1927, 1931 and 1933. I should be very greatly obliged if any reader could spare me a copy of any of these missing issues, by way of either gift or sale.

G. D. H. Cole

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Attempts to explain the writings of Franz Kafka seem only to bury the problem deeper. There is no writer about whom it is so easy to write and none about whom it is so difficult to sound convincing. *The Castle* has existed in English since 1930, *The Trial* since 1937, *America* since 1938 and a first collection of stories and aphorisms since 1933. During the war minority interest in their author became acute, and he also touched a wider audience, so that the word "kafkaesque" now conveys something to people who have not read these books. But what precisely does it convey—even to those who have? Perhaps at best a wry sense of the meaninglessness of our busiest activities. The view most heavily canvassed, the first or basic view put about by Kafka's friend and executor Max Brod and by those admirable translators the Muirs, is that Kafka's writings constitute an allegory of the life of the spirit and that *The Castle* in particular is a symbol of divine grace. As soon as biographical information became available, the Oedipus complex did not fail to rear its ugly head, particularly at the sight of excerpts from a hugely pregnant *Letter to my Father*. And in the United States, where Marxism and general literacy frequently go hand in hand, Kafka was also claimed as a satirist of Central European bureaucracy.

However, these are by no means the only views we may take of Kafka's real meaning. In the biography which he wrote in Prague in 1937 and which has had to wait ten years for publication in English,* Dr. Brod further presents his friend and benefactor as a failed Zionist. In a massive collection of articles and fragments published in America last autumn† there are almost as many theories as there are contributors (there are thirty-six contributors). And in the current issue of *Partisan Review* Mr. James Burnham (who, with the title of his book *The Managerial Revolution* has himself enriched the mythology of our time) reviews this compilation and, after severely ticking off one of its Marxist or, as Mr. Burnham would say, "Stalinist" contributors, concludes that Kafka was a Manichee and that his work is "polysemous"—a word he takes from Dante's *Convivio* and uses here to mean that Kafka's writing has "literal, allegorical, moral and anagogic meaning levels." This is probably true. It is, however, probably also true that there are no works of art of which it is not true. One says as much with a throw-away line to the effect that Kafka is just life.

I by no means wish to imply that Mr. Burnham's article is worthless or that any of this writing on Kafka is worthless. There is hardly any contribution to *The Kafka Problem* which does not here and there point out a useful detail or suggest some profitable comparison. One of the silliest articles in the book, by a Mr. John Kelly of Jersey City, argues that, through his reading of Kierkegaard, Kafka assimilated the theology of John Calvin and that in his work he figuratively deployed this theology with the fidelity which Dante used towards St. Thomas Aquinas. Since Kierkegaard was brought up not in a Calvinist but in a Lutheran church and nowhere discusses Calvin, and since his infrequent references to predestination were contemptuous, this argument crumbles at a touch. Yet, even in Mr. Kelly's article, there is a juxtaposition of texts from Kafka and texts from Karl Barth which cannot but take a little further one's understanding of both. Of course, critical tolerance may go too far. The once-popular monkeys on typewriters will also arrive at these illuminating analogies long before they have completely reproduced the contents of the British Museum Library. But this American compilation further includes notes by Franz Werfel, W. H. Auden, Albert Camus, Daniel-Rops, Jean Wahl, Bernard Groethuysen and that very intelligent new critic Mlle Claude-Edmonde Magny. And these certainly arrived at their conclusions not by dint of tapping but in all consciousness.

The most useful way of writing about Kafka is probably that practised here by Mr. Auden and M. Wahl. Instead of making a frontal attack on the Kafka problem, it isolates and modestly handles problems in Kafka. Mr. Auden classifies the various types of Quest narrative and concludes that Kafka is closest to the modern detective story in which the hero "identifies and removes the guilt." M. Wahl compares Kafka and Kierkegaard in what are essentially a series of footnotes to his now standard *Etudes kierkegaardiennes*. Camus treats Kafka as a forerunner of his own philosophy of the absurd. A psychoanalyst treats him as a victor in the battle against insanity, dying of a lung wound received in this action. Daniel-Rops (a Catholic) sees in him the tragedy of a modern and a Jew compelled to live without the consolations of faith. To an elderly German expressionist he is a German expressionist, to a young English pacifist-anarchist a pacifist-anarchist. He is praised for his thoroughgoing pessimism and, because of this same pessimism, contrasted unfavourably with one of his English imitators who permits one to retain one's "faith in life." In his biography Dr. Brod is at pains to show that through it all Kafka remained extraordinarily cheerful—indeed, that he was a far more *wholesome* writer than is commonly supposed.

The total effect of a first mass attempt to elucidate Kafka is, then, to confound. This would have appealed to Kafka. Dr. Brod has done his best to add to the confusion. For this we may forgive him, since his biography also contains the material with which to refute its author. Untidy, tendentious and too little self-effacing, it nevertheless constitutes an extremely moving document, in its account of Kafka's last illness almost unbearably so. It prints as an appendix an article by Kafka on a demonstration of aeronautics at Brescia in 1909 which I had not myself seen before, which is as fine a piece of journalism as I have ever read and which proves that Kafka was fully equipped to deal with the local, the concrete, the particular, and to deal with them gaily. How much of Kafka's inner life remained hidden from Dr. Brod's almost daily scrutiny is nevertheless evident from Kafka's work, which Dr. Brod understands as ill as the rest of us. But then perhaps we are wrong in the first place to ask for light on the genesis of work like this. It is not only the revelations of the saints which cannot be satisfactorily expounded. Axioms in mathematics are in much the same case.

Superficially, the two most obvious characteristics of Kafka's writing are its lack of decoration and the wholesale suppression of local detail. This latter characteristic, which is also found in the symbolist drama of Claudel, Maeterlinck and Yeats, becomes progressively marked and reaches its extreme in *The Castle*. A half-named hero (in letters quoted by Dr. Brod, Kafka refers to himself as "K") arrives from nowhere at a nameless village. The most highly generalised forms of narrative are musical: music is able to accommodate the private phantasies of all who have troubled to acquire its peculiar idiom. This is only a little less true of Kafka. In Kafka, prose fiction aspires with greater success than ever before to the condition of music. All undeserved misfortunes and frustrated purposes may identify themselves in K. and Josef K., those of the Jew, the artist, the unwanted son, the pauper, the wage-slave, the invalid, the conscientious objector, the revolutionary, the infant and the unmarried. In order to achieve so perfect a generalisation, Kafka himself had to be all these things. He *was* all these things, and in consequence his work is metaphysical, transcending them all. Attempts to explain it in terms of any concrete situation (always the writer's own) merely reiterate the eternal cry of the neurotic: "But *my* problems are *real*!" Where Kafka does particularise, where there are name and place, his otherwise seamless intention may perhaps be broached. For instance, if anybody in *The Castle* specifically represents Jewry, it is surely not K. himself but the Barnabas family, which bears a Jewish name and whose story, told outside the framework of the book, concerns the rejection of an unspecified "obscene" proposal from the Castle,—perhaps that proposition in theology upon which Christian belief is founded, which the Jews have consistently rejected, and which does indeed imply procreation of an abnormal type.

I see that I have described a quality in Kafka which used to be known as "universality." Another quality which has been frequently discovered in authors and praised without much attempt at definition, is "inevitability." The two are connected. That which is highly generalised approximates to a single idea. A clearly enunciated idea always sounds inevitable. Whether or no one accepts any of the positions of Platonic or Hegelian idealism, an idea always seems to have been there before. Of the "inevitable" work of art one feels that it has not been created but merely found. Few works in the present half-century give one this sense. Kafka's two later novels are among them.

The fact that they are unfinished does not affect them in the least. They exist independently of their author and independently of the words in which they are set out. Once the rough outline has been grasped, we scarcely need the author's help in disengaging the rest. His writing is mere exegesis, like our own thoughts. Sometimes it fumbles. It is quite frequently tedious. It is interesting to note, for instance, that *The Trial* makes a false start. "Someone must have been telling lies about Josef K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning. . . ." This assumption exemplifies just the kind of mistake we might have made ourselves in first announcing this matchless discovery of what we may variously formulate as pre-natal guilt, guilt without occasion or, with the existentialists, anguish in face of the void. It all depends on how we ourselves have previously interpreted this sensation or whether, indeed, we have thought about it at all, for, being wholly *sui generis*, it is not readily accessible to thought. One never pauses to admire Kafka's writing—or only negatively. Here and there a sentence so perfectly implies the whole that we find it witty. The cathedral scene in *The Trial* stands out impressively, a Gothic interpolation. Elsewhere, with the care of a responsible official compiling his reports and offering a few discreet remarks on the points of view of his applicants (employed in an office dealing with workmen's compensation, how conscious he must have been of the universal sense of grievance which he knew that he could not redress), Kafka merely exposes his material. He is painstaking, clear and unemphatic. Everything that we know about him points to his peculiar aptitude for the task.

Rayner Heppenstall

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* Franz Kafka. A Biography. By Max Brod. *Secker and Warburg*. 12s. 6d.

† The Kafka Problem. Edited by Angel Flores. *New Directions*. $5.00.

A NATION OF HERETICS

The Rise and Fall of the Ex-Socialist Government. By Christopher Hollis. *Hollis and Carter*. 8s. 6d.

Mr. Hollis is not only an enterprising publisher; he is also a Catholic convert who has really studied Marx and Lenin, and a Conservative back bencher who made a memorable speech against the American Loan. In his latest book, he sets out to analyse the betrayal of Socialism by the Labour Government. The title and the dustcover—Tory blue rampant on a background of bilious pink—sum up his attitude pretty fairly. The Labour Government, he argues at length, has already jettisoned its Socialist principles by introducing the managerial instead of the classless society and by accepting the American loan. *Ergo*, it is finished.

To summarise Mr. Hollis's thesis in these bald terms is to do scant justice to the vivacity of his style. He writes in the tradition of Belloc and Chesterton, embellishing his profound pessimism about secular society with boisterous paradoxes and smashing half-truths. Ever since "the Servile State," the Right-wing Catholic intelligentsia has exhibited a gnashing jollity in the face of British decadence. These humourless reformers, it seems to say, with their eyes fixed on the improvement of human nature, are either knaves or hypocrites. Whether they adhere to their principles or jettison them, they are equally ruining the dear old country. Their gloomy refusal to accept the doctrine of original sin and their crass faith that human beings can redeem themselves by their own efforts are tolerable only if they are greeted with a guffaw.

By adopting this sort of attitude to the Liberal Government of 1906, the Chestertons and Hilaire Bellocs were able to evolve a brilliantly scurrilous form of political journalism. The Tories, of course, never dreamt of accepting their political theory—they never even took them seriously. But they welcomed the denigration of a common foe. After all some of the dirt stuck, long after Distributism was forgotten.

Mr. Hollis's position is not dissimilar. His attitude to the present Tory leadership is discreetly contemptuous. He accepts as inevitable the nationalisation of the basic industries—indeed he goes further and accepts the statement that 30 per cent. of our industry must pass under "managerial" control. He mercilessly exposes the futility of deflation and the dangers of involving ourselves in the American slump which he believes to be inevitable. Taken by and large the proposals which he advocates, including the defence of liberty in a managerial society and the wide-spread distribution of property, will be carried out by the present government and could not possibly be carried out by his own Party.

Yet *The Rise and Fall of the Ex-Socialist Government* will probably be described by every Tory reviewer as a brilliant exposure of Socialism. Here is a typical passage:

> There is no more popular member of the present House of Commons than Mr. Anthony Greenwood. We are all of us delighted to see him there. But can anyone seriously pretend that he would be there in his early years if he was not his father's son. . . . Mr. Greenwood's nepotism is our gain. . . . Are we to believe that this is the brave new world in which hereditary privilege has been abolished? There are, if not jobs for the boys, at least seats for the boys, which is a step in the right direction. The occupants of the Socialist Front Bench have fortunately more of the ordinary instincts of human beings than they pretend to have. While the rest of us find difficulty in living up to our principles. they find difficulty in living down to theirs.

What induces a serious writer like Mr. Hollis to indulge in such malicious nonsense? The same motive which caused Belloc's jibes against Rufus Isaacs? The Catholic intellectual is in a false position. He believes passionately in tradition, but not the tradition which made us great. British history for him is a monstrous deviation from the Party line: the story of a people which prospered by heresy. Somehow this fact must be explained away; and this can only be done by re-writing history from the Reformation to the present day.

Apparently Mr. Hollis has cast himself for the role of a latter-day Belloc. He too rewrites history to suit a thesis. British Socialism has ceased to be Socialist by departing from the gospel according to Marx. Instead of introducing a classless society, it is trying to develop a new aristocracy of talent: instead of abolishing privilege, it is permitting it to co-exist with responsibility. That is the great betrayal of the last two years.

Once the verbal conceits have been removed, the argument is a little threadbare. Mr. Hollis has read much more of Marx and Lenin than any member of the Government with the exception of John Strachey. He should know that the British Labour Movement, for good or for ill, is not a Marxist movement at all. Our Socialism has much more to do with the Gospels than with the Communist Manifesto, and it can trace its ancestry back to Cromwell's soldiers. It is as little based on ideology or dogma as the Church of England and survives as successfully by adapting itself to changing circumstances with a blithe indifference to doctrinal issues involved.

Inadvertently Mr. Hollis's indictment of the Labour Government is a tribute to one of its greatest strengths. Just as the Anglican Church survives because in Britain at least it is not a catholic heresy, so the Labour Party flourishes because it is not a deviation from Marxism. Both are catholic in a British sense of the word repellent to Mr. Hollis, because both are national institutions incorporating a universal faith.

Mr. Hollis is too intelligent to overlook altogether the quandary in which his argument has landed him. If the Labour Government has really betrayed its Marxist principles, and is seeking to organise the managerial society which is anyway inevitable, then what is there for a Tory to get excited about? If the Government is really ex-Socialist, why should it fall to Tory attack? From time to time Mr. Hollis seems to be uneasily aware that he has proved too much and rumbles vaguely about totalitarian tendencies. But very soon he recovers his form and he ends by asserting that Socialism is "with Keir Hardie in the grave" and that "the key of all policy is that justice and liberty and truth be recognised as absolute values in themselves and political and economic problems be solved within the framework of the absolute values."

Neither Keir Hardie from the grave nor Clem Attlee from 10 Downing Street would disagree, with him. But they might question whether belief in absolute values is a monopoly of any Party or Church. Mr. Hollis believes that they are and it is this spiritual totalitarianism which divorces him, despite all his brilliance, from the British political tradition. In trying to prove that the Labour Government has betrayed Socialism, he only shows that we are still, thank heavens, a nation of heretics.

R. H. S. Crossman

QUEEN OF PORTUGAL

Carlota Joaquina. By Marcus Cheke. *Sidgwick and Jackson.* 15s.

The history of our oldest ally has never been of much interest hitherto to the English. The value to us of the Portuguese alliance lies in keeping open the harbours of the Azores and the splendid anchorage in the Tagus for the benefit of our Atlantic Fleet in time of war. And for that reason alone we have never tolerated Portugal coming under the control of another foreign power. Provided a Portuguese Government has maintained its independence and allowed us these basic privileges we have never bothered our heads about it. We should like to think the Portuguese are one of those fortunate nations that have no history. But Mr. Marcus Cheke will never allow that. As a sequel to his biography of the celebrated Marquis of Pombal in the eighteenth century, in *Carlota Joaquina* he offers to guide us through the welter of Portuguese politics during the forty years following the French Revolution.

The book's title is somewhat of a *pis aller*. Mr. Cheke would sooner write biography than history; but unfortunately Portugal in this period produced no outstanding personage. Indeed, lack of leadership in all quarters seems to have been the cause of the prevalent confusion. Still Mr. Cheke was determined to choose some personal peg on which to hang his history. After hesitating between a man of thought, the suave diplomatist Palmella, and a man of action, the dynamic Dom Miguel, he has finally plumped for that ugly old beldame, Queen Carlota Joaquina; because, as he rather lamely says, she "was always on the Portuguese scene." So she was; but almost invariably lurking in the wings.

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Carlota Joaquina (1775–1830) was a Spanish princess, who at the age of ten married Dom John of Portugal and bore him seven children. In 1792, when his mother went mad, Dom John became Regent of Portugal, and in 1816, at his mother's death, King. But long before she was a queen, Carlota had been estranged from her husband by her unprincipled ambition. In 1806 she intrigued to have Dom John shut up in an asylum, like his mother, and reign in his stead. The plot was betrayed, and Dom John never forgave her. Nor did she ever forgive him. All her life she was a prodigious hater. She hated her husband, for not dying and leaving her the throne; she hated her eldest son, Dom Pedro, because he stood in the light of his younger brother, Dom Miguel; she hated the English because they were heretics and liberals; she hated her Spanish relatives because they would not help her; and she hated all the Portuguese because she was a Spaniard. A single instance can be given of her vindictive nature. She bought a mule and kept it as a pet because it had once kicked a British general. But her hatred was not always so innocuous. The Marquis of Loulé was suspected of betraying her plot to Dom John. Seventeen years later he was murdered in such mysterious circumstances that no one was convicted of the crime; but all the world believed that Queen Carlota was responsible. The only things on earth she loved were power, the Catholic Church, and her darling son, Dom Miguel.

The sparks of the French Revolution flew far and wide, and set fire to liberalism in Portugal as in the rest of Europe. In the ensuing struggle between Left and Right, the party of Reform and the party of Reaction were fairly matched in popular support and incompetence. As long as Dom John was alive it did not much matter which party was momentarily on top, as he was the most accommodating king imaginable; he was quite prepared to reign either with or without a Constitution and Parliament. In 1826 he happened to be without a Constitution when he inconsiderately died. "He would have been doing me a signal favour in abstaining from dying," was Metternich's comment on hearing the news. Metternich's qualms were fully justified. Dom John's death was to produce a European imbroglio of rare intricacy, which I shall not attempt to elucidate. That is Mr. Cheke's affair; and for once his ugly heroine was able to play a leading role and vent her spite in every direction.

Bold spirits who accept this offer to pilot them through the maze of Portuguese politics will be well rewarded. Mr. Cheke has read more than thirty books in Portuguese about his subject and will explain everything capable of explanation. One, at least, of his explanations struck me with surprise. He firmly believes in freemasons as the originators of revolutions. I had always imagined they were convenient bogies invented by the Catholic Church. But no doubt Mr. Cheke knows best.

The book is enriched with four splendid royal portraits. Queen Carlota Joaquina looks like a costermonger expecting to do good business; Dom John is a very distinguished-looking old gentleman; while Dom Miguel has a figure like the young man on the flying trapeze, and an eye, as Mr. Cheke justly observes, "like Satan's."

Ralph Partridge

THE HOME TIE

Informal Education. By J. MACALISTER BREW. *Faber.* 10s. 6d.

Adult Education: The Record of the British Army. By T. H. HAWKINS and L. J. F. BRIMBLE. *Macmillan.* 15s.

Further Education. *H. M. Stationery Office.* 2s.

Dr. Macalister Brew belongs to that select company who can write about education with wit as well as wisdom. Even her definitions are refreshingly unconventional. Education is for her a matter of the three ties—the school tie, the cup tie and the home tie. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that it ought to be. While she believes that the school tie promises to be broader and the cup tie is—thanks to the increasing facilities for sport and recreation—becoming brighter, she still thinks of the home tie as having little shape and less colour.

The problem which she finds frankly disturbing is that so many people are living in one kind of mental condition, and longing to live in another. Although it may be right and natural that little children should cry "What shall I do?", it is to her wholly wrong that thousands of retired business men and civil servants and old-age pensioners are asking the same question. To reply that the solution is more education is only to beg the question. What kind of education? The seekers after goodness, truth and beauty are, it is true, not confined to that 25 per cent of the community who can be vocal about their needs; but it is equally true that the remaining 75 per cent have not been attracted by the appeals of the statutory bodies and the voluntary organisations to study "subjects" or to enrol for "courses".

One of the merits of *Informal Education* is that Dr. Macalister Brew succeeds in stating the needs of this majority in their simplest terms. "How can education be 'inserted' into existing social units, and how can those who come to scoff be persuaded to remain to learn?" Only by giving people information on the subject which has momentarily captured their interest. If further education is to succeed, it must start from the practical angle—from the situation in which adults find themselves and from the details of the world around them. Therefore, says Dr. Macalister Brew, let us link education with home interests and the groups and societies in which men and women meet—from the Trade Union Group to the Village Pig Club, from the Old English Dancing Society to the Public House Poetry Corner, from the Public Library to the Canteen—and let our appeal to them be through their stomachs, their feet, their eyes, their feelings, their work and their ears.

What opportunities she finds in this approach! The what, the why and the how of eating can provide a starting point for a series of talks on the food of other countries, and pave the way for a second series on health. An informal discussion on dancing can lead from dancing to games, from games to camping, from camping to holidays, and from holidays to the study of languages. The use of pictures, graphs and charts—the very obvious use of the walls of any building in which people meet—has never been fully exploited. By recognising the value of emotional education, a new approach can be made to music, drama, the problems of marriage and parenthood, and even religious experience. From an interest in gardening it is an easy transition to an interest in one's own and other people's geographical situation; and from the romance of the making of everyday things to the marvels of medicine and science. The use of the radio rather than its abuse, the use of the library as a social centre, the social as well as the private necessity for reading—these are all approaches which have to be made through the ears.

Dr. Macalister Brew's role is that of the missionary; and, like all good missionaries, she claims no originality for her ideas. *Informal Education* is, as she confesses, an "attempt to describe various methods of approach which have already been tried and . . . to draw some conclusions as to how such methods could be extended and developed."

It is with these same methods of approach that Major Hawkins and Mr. Brimble are concerned in *Adult Education: The Record of the British Army*. The task which faced educationists in the Services during the war was essentially to provide for those men and women who "began to feel the need for expressing those desires of the mind and emotions and spirit which the challenge of war had produced," but who were unable to formulate their wants. The result was experiment and improvisation, the use of methods which "raised many a scornful eyebrow," and the slow realisation of the need to provide educational opportunities "at the level of ordinary men and women rather than at the heights to which some enthusiasts think they ought to be."

Although Major Hawkins and Mr. Brimble undoubtedly share Dr. Macalister Brew's missionary zeal, their primary purpose is to record—and, occasionally, to assess—the educational developments in the wartime Army. Despite the detail of their narrative and the wealth of reference to authoritative and official sources, they are clearly conscious that many of the experiments and improvisations which they describe had their beginnings in the fumbling search for a fresh approach to the education of adults. How it was done—and to what extent the need was met—is the story of the birth and growth of A.B.C.A., the development of education centres, the introduction of handicrafts, and the encouragement of music, art and drama.

Both missionary and chroniclers—however different their presentation—share to-day the satisfaction of knowing that the informal approach in further education has received the official blessing of the Ministry of Education. To those who have retained their faith in it, nothing could be more encouraging than the passage in *Further Education* in which the Ministry declares:

> The lesson to be learnt from wartime experiences is that when we plan our further education we must do so in the widest possible terms, thinking not only of the types of studies and activities to be provided, but placing also a proper emphasis on the potentialities of the individual man and woman, and keeping our methods and organisation flexible and responsive to their needs.

Education for leisure is, of course, as the Ministry is careful to point out, only a part of further education. Nevertheless, there can be no question but that the immediate task of local education authorities is the all-embracing one of assuming leadership "in the co-operative enterprise of community education."

JOHN MACKAY-MURE

"MY LIFE AND CONCEITS"

Frank Harris: His Life and Adventures. An Autobiography. *Richards Press.* 25s.

There has been a certain amount of mystery about Frank Harris's autobiography which, when published in France many years ago, was called *My Life and Loves.* To judge from the corrections and abridgements in Harris's handwriting in a copy of the first private edition, he had prepared the English version some time before his death in 1931. Seventeen years, perhaps more, have passed, and now English readers will be able to judge this book for the first time. It is a self-portrait modelled, it would seem from echoes one catches here and there, on the *Confessions* of Rousseau. A part of Harris was always obsessed with telling the truth while another

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part of him was busy distorting it: the result was an extraordinary mixture of false-colouring, sexual revelations (most of which have been omitted from this edition) and falsehood. Grant Richards in his otherwise admiring preface speaks of Harris's "vivid imagination" and "unscrupulous invention" and what emerges from this book is the fact that Harris was never content with truth by itself: he heightened its impact and tried to make what he had to say more startling by deliberate dramatisation. An American, he used some of the advertising methods of that country to impress himself on London literary life: he became a successful and able editor and critic. He turned his hand to everything—hotel keeping, finances, creative writing, and biography. His two volumes of short stories—*Elder Conklin* and *Montes The Matador*—were acclaimed by George Meredith and Arnold Bennett, but they fell flat with the general public, and now they are hard to come by. Harris wanted his work to be as good as the stories of Maupassant or Balzac. On one occasion George Moore happened to see them; and his remarks excited in Harris characteristic reactions:

> "It must make you feel very conceited," George Moore said.
>
> "On the contrary," I said, "it has made be feel very humble. I am not sure that a Modern Idyll is better than Balzac's masterpiece Inconnu or his Autre Etude de Femme."
>
> "Good gracious!" cried Moore, "You surely didn't think you could write better than Balzac straight off, did you?"
>
> "Certainly I did," I replied, "or I'd never have begun."

This kind of bravado runs through the entire autobiography. Harris shows himself as a person who continually wishes to "shock" and to come out on top in every verbal combat. To read his stories now is to find them somewhat stilted and self-conscious except in the love passages, where he let himself go in writing as he did in life.

The English edition does not differ substantially from the original except that about a hundred pages or more have been cut out, pages which revealed with a Guardsman's ruthlessness of language, and a showmanship worthy of Barnum, Harris's bedroom activities. They had neither wit, imagination, nor any originality. A great deal of this material seems to have been written when Harris was already an old man: in consequence he gives the blunt facts, much as a journalist would do in describing a murder, without any of the emotion or vision which might have transformed the material and made it a part of a work of art on the level with Joyce's passages on Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*. Indeed, the whole of Harris's book has a fatigued journalistic flavour, the table-talk of a man who finds his audience frozen and speechless.

There are dozens of portraits in this book—Froude, Tennyson, Joseph Conrad, Cecil Rhodes, H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde—but among the best, it seems to me (though again one questions its veracity) is the chapter devoted to John Ruskin. Harris was eager to meet the "most extraordinary master of English prose since Sir Thomas Browne," but was surprised to find him "a short frail man without any visible signs of great talent." He looked like "some old unhappy bird." Ruskin had an idea that God had given him a "mission," had made him a moral judge in matters of art and it was this sense of "vocation" that made him, it appears, commit a wonderfully Victorian act of vandalism. The story of Ruskin's discovery of certain bizarre Turner sketches is well known but this conversation with Harris on the reasons why he burnt them is worth quoting:

> "I had always believed (Ruskin said) that the good and the pure and the beautiful were one, various manifestations of the Divine. Again and again I had associated beauty of colour in painting with holiness of life. I knew of course that the rule was not invariable; Titian was supposed to have lived a loose life; they even talked about him in connection with his daughter, but it seemed to me like madness, a mere legend, not to be considered. I always cherished the belief that Goodness and Wisdom and purity and truth went together with great talent, and Turner was my hero. One day... I came across a portfolio filled with painting after painting of Turner's of the most shameful sort, utterly inexcusable and to me inexplicable. . . . I ascertained that my hero used to leave his house in Chelsea and go down to Wapping on Friday afternoon and live there until Monday morning with the sailors' women, painting them in every posture of abandonment. What a life, and what a burden it cast upon me! I took hundreds of scrofulous sketches and paintings and burnt them where they were... I am proud of it, proud..."

True? Who knows? In any case I get the smell of falsehood from Harris's account of Randolph Churchill. When Chancellor of the Exchequer, he resigned, persuaded that he was irreplaceable; to his horror the resignation was accepted, an excellent substitute found. Harris claims that it was to him personally that Churchill made the famous remark: "All great men make mistakes; Napoleon forgot Blücher, I forgot Goschen." Likewise Harris claims that it was he personally who, on a famous occasion urged General Boulanger to embark upon a *coup d'état*. Passages such as these make every word of this autobiography doubtful and therefore eventually dull.

Harris is reputed, by those he never blackmailed to have been charming, but after examining his self-portrait one feels dislike if not disgust. He has praised himself considerably and in doing so reveals to the reader the more unpleasant side of his nature. Here there is no patina of smiles or words to cover his egotism; he has turned himself inside out and how little there is to show.

He made a mark on his times. A great number of his eminent contemporaries had cause either to like or detest him. The five hundred and forty-two pages of anecdote, description, and self-confession contained in this book are well printed on good paper. After years of furtive and badly printed editions in Paris, *My Life and Loves* has become respectable at last. ROBIN KING

MORE ON FRANCE

My Country-in-Law. By MARY MIAN. *Michael Joseph.* 10s. 6d.

France. By FLORENCE GILLIAM. *E. P. Dutton and Co., New York.* 9s. 6d.

The Germans in France. By JACQUES LORRAINE. *Hutchinson.* 16s.

France is likely to inspire many books so long as French history between 1939 and 1944, that extraordinary sequence of events, remains a vivid memory. These three books, two by American women and one by a Frenchman, illustrate in different ways the danger of the subject: the danger of emotion warping observation, of the author becoming a propagandist. The Americans are too sentimental, and the French author too assertive.

My Country-in-Law is the best written. In a charming introduction James Thurber rightly says that "it is a blessed change from the familiar 'I Married a Frenchman' type of personal record in which the heroine struts, giggles, and wisecracks from the beginning 'I' to the final 'me.'" Mary Mian is the American wife of a French artist and what gives a special interest to her very vivid description of the peasant life of her husband's family is that the scene is set in the Creuse, a relatively little known part of France, which she knows intimately. But I feel that her

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sketches, many of which are admirable, are marred by a very respectable fault: excess of affection for her subject. There are no shadows in her picture.

Florence Gilliam's "tribute by an American woman," as she calls it, is a breathless, enthusiastic survey of French life, history, art, culture, geography (and anything else you like to think of) conducted in a jargonistic style of which the frequently used word "ideation" gives the dreadful measure. It is not a good book, but being easy to read and remarkably accurate in its information can be recommended to beginners. Miss Gilliam loves France. The trouble is that she cannot say so without screaming her head off.

The Germans in France is a book whose function is obscured because the stress of emotion under which it appears to have been written has wrecked its construction. Mr. Lorraine seems to have wished to write a detached account of Nazi rule in France, connecting this theme with the philosophic origins of National Socialism. As it is, his book contains a very full and very accurate description of German administration and policy but he gets carried away into polemics by indignation. One must regret that this spoils his book, but one cannot deny sympathy. Mr. Lorraine's study of pan-German philosophy and its outcome in the German attempt to abolish France is the most absorbing and important part of his book. Philosophic origins are easy to adduce for any policy of any country, for you only need to select from the literature of the country in question as Nazi propagandists very cleverly did for us. Germany seems unique, however, in the closeness of the ties between the national thinkers and the national men of action, and for this reason the tracing of the learned ancestory of Hitlerism always makes a fascinating study. Had Mr. Lorraine confined his book to researches in this field illustrated by German conduct in France he might have written something worthy to stand with Rahon Butler's masterly *Roots of National Socialism.* CHRISTOPHER SYKES

A BRIGHT STAR

The Darker the Night the Brighter the Stars. By FRIEDRICH SCHLOTTERBECK. *Gollancz.* *7s. 6d.*

This book is the authentic story of a German worker who fought against Hitler first, last, and all the time. After a year of illegal activity he was arrested at the end of 1933 and given a sentence of three years. From prison he went straight to concentration camp as a "protective custody man"—one of those who could not expect to be liberated by anything short of a change of regime. To his surprise he was offered his freedom in 1943, after ten years behind barbed wire or bars, on condition of his working as informer for the Gestapo. Schlotterbeck was inclined to refuse this offer; but his comrades in the camp decided that the forces at liberty were so tragically few that it was advisable for him to get out on any terms. Accordingly he began a battle of wits against the Gestapo, cheating them of information while renewing his anti-Nazi activity, until betrayal forced him to escape over the Swiss border.

Such are the bare bones of an exciting story which could stand as a symbol of our tortured age. Schlotterbeck's book, excellently translated, is written entirely without humbug, without preaching, without self-justification, without literary frills. For excitement in the cinema sense the closing chapters are the best; it is the account of the long years in the camp that is the most revealing. We have had our fill of accounts of the torments, the murders, the beatings-up, the starvation; here we have a picture of the life of a trusted prisoner, a "Floor Senior," who is on conversational terms with the S.S. guards and is permitted to work outside the camp under supervision—though at the same time he escapes none of the customary maltreatment. The steady brutalisation, the endless stupidity, the monotony of such a life; the final horror of being forced to assist in the breaking down of all human kindness, decency and comradeship; it is such things that warrant a sharper denunciation of Nazism than Belsen at its worst.

In the last chapters little is said of what was in fact achieved by the underground organisation. The writer, after what he has been through, may well feel it wise to guard secrets in case of a next time; we all know how the full accounts published after 1918 of prisoner-of-war escapes harmed the escapers of the last war. But a likelier explanation is that the sum total of achievement was not, and could not be, very great. At the same time, anecdote after anecdote gives a lively and obviously authentic picture of the disillusionment of the population in the years of impending defeat, the hatred of the privileged Nazi heirarchy, the enmity between Army and S.S., the steady decline in morale, and the slow realisation of where the real responsibility for bombings and front casualties must be placed.

One cannot read the final part of this book without remarking once more on the tragic weakness of the German underground; and one makes the same observation in reading the opening chapters, dealing with 1933. To be disillusioned with Hitler as a *Feldherr* after crushing defeats, as Germans certainly were from Stalingrad on, is another thing from being truly opposed to Nazism; and to grumble in air-raid shelters is another thing from rising. As the Gollancz-Vansittart controversy moves from the topical to the historical plane, and as more evidence becomes available, we see increasingly that the truth lies between two extreme distortions. MERVYN JONES

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. By JOHN LOCKE. *Dent's Everyman's Library.* 4*s.*

This new addition to Dent's admirable Library is most welcome. Though Locke's *Essay* is here published in an abridged form, the editor, Raymond Wilburn, has maintained the structure of a classic very much in contrast to the recent edition of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America.* Moreover, Locke himself appears to have asked for an abridgement of the *Essay* when he wrote: "I will not deny, but possibly it might be reduced to a narrower compass. . . . But to confess the truth, I am now too lazy, or too busy to make it shorter." No German philosopher would have dared such an amusing confession. The Editor's introduction is informative, but perhaps somewhat timid. He writes: "It is certainly true that a treatment of analytic geometry and calculus would have enriched the *Essay* greatly, and that a more technical knowledge than Locke possessed would have made the discussion of certain topics, e.g., space and number, more satisfactory." One would have wished that a more explicit and a more fundamental criticism of Locke's philosophical position as Leibniz's *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement humain* suggested it might have been included. For it was with Leibniz's famous dictum *Nempe nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu, nisi ipse intellectus,* that Locke's philosophy was proved wrong and historically overcome.

The Last Chance. By RICHARD SCHWEIZER. *Secker & Warburgh and Lindsay Drummond.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

This novel was written shortly after the successful film version of Richard Schweizer's story of escape. It is a faithful copy, in narrative form, of the film—on the whole too faithful. Mr. Schweizer is an admirable script-writer; the dialogue in this book has the clarity and sharpness of the original (one can almost hear the tones, see the actors in motion); but

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PUTNAM

the background is so vaguely sketched in that one feels the lack of the camera. The characters are suggested more than portrayed. When the narrator, who is in a crowded German truck of prisoners on its way from Italy to a German prison-camp, escapes under cover of an Allied raid, meets a young American by the name of Braddock, action follows action, without breathing space, almost exactly as the film did. They spend the night in a hayloft in Italy; they are helped by the farmer, who gives them food at the risk of his own life; they stow away on board a miller's cart in an effort to reach the lake in Northern Italy which borders Switzerland; but these episodes are sketchy in the novel, they need depth and more visual power. In fact this piece of work is more in the nature of a commentary than a novel. One notices it most when the refugees reach the small northern village where the local priest is helping dozens of fleeing victims to find their way into Switzerland; not once does the Italian background convince the reader. The style of the book is racy and readable, but Mr. Schweizer is one of those writers who seem to have a pepper pot filled with exclamation marks. Despite its faults, the book is tautly exciting—a recollection in tranquillity, as it were, of the intense film emotion.

Week-end Competitions

No. 905

Set by H. A. St. G. Saunders

The practice begun during the war, of issuing to members of the Services guides to the habits and customs of countries to which they had been posted together with appropriate rules of conduct, still continues. Competitors are asked to furnish an extract (250 words maximum) from a guide of this nature, *either* to Heaven *or* Hell. Entries by July 8.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 902

Set by G. W. Stonier

The usual prizes are offered for the best future remarks of Mr. Churchill, Mr. Shinwell, Mr. Ben Hecht, Mr. P. G. Wodehouse, the President of the Royal Academy and the competitor himself. A remark from each of these persons is required from competitors.

Report by G. W. Stonier

Some competitors seem to have been a little doubtful about the meaning of "best future remarks," taking best to signify witty or wise; the attempt to make Mr. Shinwell one and Mr. Wodehouse the other produced some hybrid results. I meant, of course, most aptly characteristic of the speaker: the best Churchillism (which might be either pithy or excessively orotund), Shinwellism (political dropped brick), Woosterism, etc. A fair number of hits were made along these lines, in which not unnaturally Mr. Churchill came an easy first. Few entries managed to improve on the actual remarks quoted recently from Mr. Hecht and Mr. Wodehouse, and in general competitors were either too modest or too mean about their own possible *obiter dicta*. No one, I think, produced a set of six remarks that was equally good all through. A First Prize of 3 guineas goes to Stanley J. Sharpless, who starts off with three bulls' eyes, and a second prize of 3 guineas is divided between H. A. C. Evans and Terence Melican. First let me give a selection from the others.

MR. CHURCHILL

(speaking of Mr. Shinwell). The right honourable gentleman has a unique capacity for generating heat everywhere except in British homes and factories. (E. W. Fordham)

(in the next Tory government; addressing bloated capitalists). . . . and we don't care a *Tinker's Cuss* for the rest! (Semiquaver)

Nay, moreover, we know that we can put our faith in the sound judgment and level-headedness of the people of England. (E. S. Goodwill)

MR. SHINWELL

(A.D. 1950). I am certainly backing Tinker's Curse for the Derby. (Denis Grundy)

We are facing a crisis! Unless the vast surplus stocks of coal in this country are used quickly there will be distress and unemployment in the mining industry. Therefore I say to you, let the fires roar and the lights blaze—don't give two hoots. (Ben Ellison)

If our opponents have cold feet I don't care a damn. (E. W. Fordham)

MR. BEN HECHT

Now the holiday-making is over . . . (Granville Garley)

(after we have hissed his play). The British are just plain Philistines! (Edward Choppen)

The lion of Judah was a lion when all the other lions were unlicked cubs. (E. S. Goodwill)

MR. P. G. WODEHOUSE

I am not afraid of war. There are good hotels in Moscow. (Fergie)

Fortunately there is still a little room in this naughty world for a gentleman's gentleman with the highest references. (E. S. Goodwill)

PRESIDENT OF THE R.A.

It has been a great help for us to have Mr. Truman assist in the judging. (L. G. Udall)

(in fifteen years). I ask you all to pledge yourselves to fight against these near invaders of our galleries, these apostles of ugliness, Vincent Cézanne and Paul Van Gogh. (Semiquaver)

We should be disappointed if the critics were not. (Pibwob)

COMPETITOR

Ah, the good old Forties—those were the times! (J. G.)

Although a Socialist, I have, for my own part, usually found competition to pay higher dividends than co-operation. (Allan M. Laing)

(from an unwritten novel) . . . a glance redolent not only of the present indicative, but of a past imperfect . . . (Edward Choppen)

And, waiter, bring me a fillet of steak underdone. (S. W. G.)

FIRST PRIZE

Churchill: I can imagine one Gadarene swine grunting to another as they hurtled into the abyss: "It'll be all right so long as we Keep Left."

Shinwell: Six days shalt thou labour, said the Lord. The Labour Party has gone one better than that.

Ben Hecht: I hope the British Empire sinks by the Stern.

P. G. Wodehouse: We need more of the Wooster-Jeeves relationship in industry to-day to stop all these strikes.

P.R.A.: Who put the "Ass" in Picasso?

Myself: What are we fighting for this time?

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

SECOND PRIZE

Mr. Churchill: Never was so little done by so many for so long.

Mr. Shinwell: I never said that.

Ben Hecht: We must be Stern.

P. G. Wodehouse: Quite nice chaps, the Russians.

P.R.A.: I got a horse.

Me: A. M. Laing again? Oh, well . . .

H. A. C. EVANS

Mr. Churchill: I come before you as the exponent of true Socialism, so long misrepresented by these dignified buffoons. Where is the spirit of William Morris?

Mr. Shinwell: As for the rest, they should be set to work on the lowest face of the Bottomless Pit.

Ben Hecht: My patience is exhausted.

P. G. Wodehouse: I don't think I'll broadcast, old bean, thanks all the same.

President of the Royal Academy: Graham Sutherland? I'd like to see him hung.

Me: God! Another Stonier competition!

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WINGATE

Appointments Vacant

UNIVERSITY of Sydney. The Senate will shortly proceed to the appointment to the Chair of Oriental Studies which will become vacant upon the retirement of Prof. A. L. Sadler. It will be glad to hear before July 31, 1947, from anyone who would like to be considered for the appointment. Duties of the Chair require particular emphasis on Oriental Languages. Salary is £1,250 p.a. but negotiations for a general increase in University salaries are in progress. There will be retirement provision on the lines of F.S.S.U. and, in addition, the Univ. pays £400 by way of annuity. One year's leave is granted on full pay every seven years or thereabouts. Travelling exps. will be paid as arranged at time of appointment. Applics. direct to: G. Dale, Acting Registrar, The University of Sydney.

UNIVERSITY of Edinburgh. The University Court invite applics. for the post of Assistant in Department of Philosophy (Logic and Metaphysics). Salary will be £400 p.a., and the appointment, which is subject to the conditions of the F.S.S.U., will date from October 1, 1947. Applics., with evidence of qualifics. and the names of not less than three refs., should be sent to R. Jardine Brown, Secretary to the University, by July 31, 1947.

UNIVERSITY of Adelaide. Elder Professor of Music and Director of the Elder Conservatorium of Music. Universities Bureau of British Empire, 8 Park St., W.1, invites applics. for above mentioned appointment. Sal. £1,400 p.a. (Australian). Duties, which include teaching of subjects to Univ. degree standard, will commence not later than Feb., 1948. Further partics., incl. those of Superannuation and travelling allowance, obtainable from Secretary, Universities Bureau of the British Empire. Applications close on July 12.

UNIVERSITY College, Southampton. An Assistant Lecturer in Social Studies is reqd. for October, 1947. Candidates should have good academic education pref. with qualifics. in Psychology and Mental Health. Practical exp. in Case-work essential. Work will offer scope and variety. Salary not less than £400 p.a. Further information may be obtained from the Registrar, to whom applics. must be sent before July 19.

VICTORIA Univ. College, Wellington, New Zealand. Applics. invited for post of Principal from any person who has held a responsible teaching position in a University and who has given evidence of possessing powers of administration. Sal. £2,000 p.a. (New Zealand currency). Conditions of appointment and forms of applic. from Secretary, Universities Bureau of the British Empire, 8 Park St., London, W.1. Closing date for receipt of applications is July 31, 1947.

B.B.C. invites applics. for post of Investigator in Central Establishment Office, Staff Administration. Duties consist of "job evaluation" or the assessment and comparative review of posts throughout the Corporation and advising Departmental Heads on organising and staffing. Desirable qualifics. include critical and analytical faculties, and ability to elicit and assess all information relevant to investigation. A university degree and/or a legal training will be an advantage. Max. starting salary £850 p.a., rising to £1,100 p.a. Detailed applics. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, W.1, marked "Investigator," within 7 days. For acknowledgment enclose stamped addressed envelope.

B.B.C. invites applics. for Russian, Ukranian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croat, Rumania, Czech, Slovak, Dutch, Spanish, Turkish, Hungarian, and Scandinavian language Monitors at Reading. Duties consist of reporting on radio transmissions in these languages of which complete idiomatic grasp is essential. Good knowledge of current political events necessary particularly in relation to the relevant countries. Max. starting salary £530 p.a., rising to £680 p.a. Detailed applics. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, marked "Monitors" within 7 days. For acknowledgment enclose stamped add. env.

CITY of Bradford Educ. Cttee. Applics. invited for post of full-time Educational Psychologist (Woman) to work in Child Guidance Clinic and to organise classes for backward children. Candidates should possess an Hons. Degree in Psychology and must have had exp. in Child Guidance work. Commencing salary £350 p.a., rising, subject to satisfactory service, by annual increments of £25 to £500 p.a. plus bonus (at present £48 2s. p.a.). Applics., giving full details of age, exp., etc., with copies of not more than 3 recent testims., by July 12, to Thos. Boyce, Director of Educ., Town Hall, Bradford.

PETERBOROUGH Joint Educ. Board. County Grammar School for Girls. (Headmistress: Miss M. Mathews, M.A., Oxon.) Applics. invited for following posts which will become vacant in September. (1) Senior Science Mistress: Applicants, who must be fully qualified and expd., will be reqd. to take charge of Science in this School of 500 Girls and should hold an Hons. Degree in Biology with subsidiary Chemistry or Physics, and be prepared to teach Biology to Higher School Cert. standard and some General Science in the Middle School. Salary according to the Burnham Scale together with an allowance of £60 p.a. under the current report, for special responsibility. (2) Senior Music Mistress: Applicants must be prepared to organise the Music teaching throughout the School and will be reqd. to undertake aural training and class singing together with some pianoforte teaching. Good qualifics. and exp. desirable. Salary according to the Burnham Scale; post at present carries an allowance for special responsibility. Apply by letter in first instance to the Headmistress, giving full partics. of qualifics. and exp. and enclosing testimonials.

Appointments Vacant—continued

CITY of Oxford Children's Homes. Owing to reorganisation foster parents (married couples) are required at: (a) A Home for 36 Boys and Girls. (b) A reception centre which will also be used as a short stay home. An assistant foster mother is also required for each home. Inclusive rate of pay for Foster Mothers is £3 18s. p.w., for Assistants £3 12s. p.w., and for Foster Fathers £5 p.w., subject in each case to a deduction of 23s. p.w. for board, lodging and laundry which will be provided. Conditions of service will be those of the Natl. Joint Council for Staffs of Hospitals and Allied Institutions. It is regretted that there is no accommodation for children of applicants. Further partics. can be obtained from the Superintendent, Miss B. M. Brock, 21 Gloucester Green, Oxford.

SUFFOLK. St. Felix School, Southwold. Wanted in September if possible: Senior Modern Languages Mistress, main subject French. Post of special responsibility. Revised Burnham Scale, Govt. Superann. Apply Headmistress.

ACKWORTH School, Nr. Pontefract, Yorks. (Co-ed. boarding school cond. by Socy. of Friends.) Reqd. for September, 1947, Master or Mistress (pref. res.) to teach Mathematics. Salary, Burnham scale. Apply as soon as possible to Headmaster.

WANTED September for Co-educational school, Master to teach French to Univ. Entrance standard. Box 7774.

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ST. MARY'S Town & Country School requires Sept.: At Stanford Park, nr. Rugby (boarding school) Senior English Master, experienced Froebel teacher, qualified matron; at 38 Eton Ave., N.W.3 (day school), experienced Froebel teacher, Senior Master to teach General subjects. Games, carpentry an asset.

WANTED September, trained nursery school teacher for small prog. co-educational school run lines "Education through Art." Small salary, but scope for initiative on pioneer lines. Merrymay Centre, Ditchling, Sx.

TWO Lady Cooks (Head and Assistant) required September. Household of 145. Write fully Hollington Park School for Girls, St. Leonards-on-Sea.

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POST wanted as Assistant Matron or Cook in small-children's boarding school, where own child can attend, by capable Austrian woman with girl, 6. Box 7101.

YOUNG man, public school, exp. office routine, typing, etc., literary work; perfect German, seeks work some evenings and/or week-ends. Anything considered. Box 7139.

WIDOW, 32, educated, sks. employment in country or near, Home Counties pref., where 2 small children welcomed. As housekeeper, matron, or help run Guesthouse, nursery school, or similar concern. Box 7153.

S.R.N. reqs. daily post for child in private house/nursery school. Box 7423.

Appointments Wanted—continued

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L.S.E. Graduate, 26, male, with good honours degree B.Sc. (Econ.), experience in administration adult education, seeks post. Social research preferred. Box 7150.

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ARCHITECT, wife, baby 3 months, seek quiet holiday end August. Suggestions welcomed. Box 7171.

CORNISH holiday: Informal house-party young prof. people staying attractive Cornish cove, July, invites few others wanting leisurely open-air holiday; similar party Devon, August, and visit to Edinburgh Music Festival. Box 1876.

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YOUNG Frenchman, student (Haut Commerce) would like to spend summer vacation in family au pair. Box 7137.

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